

THE PLACE OF ANDRE MAUROIS IN THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW BIOGRAPHY

by

Beverly M. O'Donnell

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Thesis

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DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW BIOGRAPHY

by

Beverly M. O'Donnell

(B.S. in Ed., Fitchburg Teachers College, 1941)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the
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INTRODUCTION

The first part of the book is devoted to a general introduction to the subject of the book. It is divided into two main parts: the first part is devoted to a general introduction to the subject of the book, and the second part is devoted to a more detailed discussion of the various aspects of the subject.

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INTRODUCTION

Biography has become one of the most popular literary forms. Its vogue today rivals that of the novel. Sales records, publishers' notes, library lists and newspaper reviews all indicate that life-writing is receiving unparalleled attention. The rapid development of interest in the lives and personalities of others is, in a sense, a modern development. It is true that in the eighteenth century, when biography emerged in English letters as a recognized and clearly defined literary genre, its appeal was widespread and it enjoyed considerable popularity. The nineteenth century also was rich in the amount and variety of biographical publications. However, the interest of the reading public in the biographical literature of the last twenty five years is definitely without parallel.

Literary artists such as Lytton Strachey, Gamaliel Bradford, Philip Guedalla, Emil Ludwig and André Maurois are largely responsible for the present-day vogue of biography. They not only have produced a new type of biography, but they also have made it immensely popular. Each author has attracted multitudes of readers in his own country and, when his works have been translated, has found foreign readers as appreciative and as enthusiastic. The notable success of these writers and others of the modern

school in presenting Lives in the form of the novel, the drama and the essay has done much to cause the average reader to forsake fiction in favor of attractively written biography.

It is the purpose of this study to treat one of these artists--André Maurois--in such a manner as to determine his proper place in the development of the modern biography. The manner employed is that of critical analysis of the contributions of this writer to the field of biography.

The consideration of this study seems justified in the light of previous investigations and criticisms that range from those which refuse Maurois recognition as a biographer to those which credit him with the introduction, popularization, and even perfection of a new type of life-writing.

This study will attempt to show that the contributions of André Maurois in the realm of biography are threefold: first, the introduction of "fictionalized" biography; second, the popularization of the above-mentioned type of biography, sometimes called "romanticized" or "novelized"; third, a life of Byron which will take a high place in Byron bibliography in particular, and in the field of life-writing in general.

The method of procedure employed will be: first, a general definition, clarification, and evaluation of what will be called the "new biography" through a comparison of the aims, methods, and style of traditional biography with those of the modern school; second, a detailed consideration of André Maurois's theories of biographical writing; third, a critical evaluation of Maurois's major and minor biographies, with reference to purpose, method, and style.

By the term "fictionalized", as applied to biography in this study, is meant that which employs the methods of fiction. The term is not used to mean that which is not truthful.

By the term "romanticized", as applied to biography in this study is meant that which is treated in a romantic, emotional, fashion, stressing subjectivity on the part of the biographer.

By the term "novelized", as applied to biography in this study is meant that which follows the pattern or form of the novel.

By the term "pure" or "true" biography is meant that biography which has for its essentials: historical truth, objective and impartial treatment, and literary merit.

CHAPTER I

THE NEW BIOGRAPHY

The new biographers consciously hold the theory that only in their time and by them has the true art of biographical portraiture been discovered. Why the term "new biography"? What is the difference between traditional and modern biography? Why and when did the change in biographical writing take place?

An analysis of the aims and methods of traditional biographers as compared with those of the modern school and a brief history of life-writing to the present time are necessary in order to understand the trends in the development of twentieth-century biography. Harold Nicolson says, "The development of biography is primarily the development of the taste for biography."¹ Each century has had biographical works which were great when examined and judged in the light of the "taste" of the times. But the vast amount of biographical material published since 1900 has so focused attention on the "new biography", as to make it seem that nothing of any literary merit was written before

¹ Harold Nicolson, The Development of English Biography, (Hogarth Lectures on Literature Series, 1928), p. 135.

that time. A brief review of biography up to 1900 will serve to clarify this point.

The stories of Joseph and his Brethren in the Book of Genesis and the story of David in other books of the Bible have been called the first biographies. Early life-writing however, was considered a branch of history. The Roman writers--Plutarch, Suetonius, Tacitus, Herodotus, Livy--had more of history than biography in their "Lives".

The first English biographies, which appeared in the early eighth century, were written in Latin and were concerned only with the lives of saints and martyrs, or with the lives of royalty. There was a great mass of biographical writing at this time, but few important individual works. The major purpose of this biography, more properly termed hagiography or sacred writing, was that of moral instruction. It was characterized by supernatural anecdotes; it was not particularly concerned with the truth; and it did not necessarily give a complete life-story. Often the saint presented was not identified, and rarely was he presented as a living person. Adamnan's Life of St. Columba and Bede's Life of St. Cuthbert are representative of the best life-writing of this period.

From the ninth to the thirteenth centuries eccle-

siastical chronicles continued and particularly after the Norman Conquest (1066) chronicles of royal lives increased. Some writing was done in the vernacular, but it was inferior to that done in Latin because of over-simplification and carelessness. Only three lives appeared which seemed to stress the man rather than the religion and they were written in Latin--The Life of Alfred The Great by Bishop Asser, The Life of Anselm by Eadmer, a Canterbury monk, and The Great Life (Magna Vita) of Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln by the Abbot Adam. These works mentioned some details of private life and thus marked the beginning of individualization. On the whole, the period from 700 to 1500 was a static period in English Biography. No noticeable progress was made and the specimens of life-writing do not compare in human interest with the works of the Roman biographers mentioned above.

Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries there was little biographical writing in England other than the records of antiquarians. One work, The Book of Margery Kempe, stands out because of its attempt at individualization. This book written in 1436, but only recently published in 1942, although primarily intended to reveal the spiritual life of the author, nevertheless, in a fairly complete manner, also related the events of her personal life.

After the Renaissance and during the Elizabethan Age, biography went through a transitional period from 1500 to 1600. A new interest in the individual brought about in biography the introduction of specific detail and description of personalities. Four books which were published during this period--Thomas More's Life of Richard III, Cavendish's Life of Cardinal Wolsey, Roper's Life of Sir Thomas More, and Nicholas's Sir Thomas More effected a recognition of biography as such. Although they were not in all cases complete life-stories, and although they contained anecdotes of doubtful authenticity, they showed clearly the beginnings of individualization and character analysis by biographers who were interested in and had some close knowledge of their subjects.

The effects of the Reformation and the Civil War can be seen in the biographical writing of the seventeenth century, where a new interest in ecclesiastical and political history is evident. The writing is commemorative and eulogistic; it contains many biblical references; and often it tends to become tedious. In the seventeenth century, however, the beginnings of formal literary biography are seen in Izaak Walton's Lives (1640-1678). Although Walton follows tradition--the tradition of hagiography--and in so doing is representative of the period in

which he lived, nevertheless he deserves a high place in the development of biography because Walton recognized biography as an art. His research is more scholarly; his style is more careful and dignified than that of the writers who preceded him. Walton has definite limitations as a biographer--his partial portrait-painting, his use of panegyric, and his inability to humanize his subjects--; but his five lives are outstanding in English Biography as the first examples of life-writing by a literary man.

The growth of interest during the seventeenth century in the middle classes is seen in the rapid increase in secular biographies of good citizens not necessarily connected with royalty, and in the number of collections of biographies of literary men. This was the period of the "character writers", Joseph Hall, John Earle, Thomas Fuller and Sir Thomas Overbury, and the antiquarians, John Aubrey and Anthony Wood. It was at this time that everyone who thought he (and often she) could write was publishing memoirs, diaries, or "intimate biographies", and the late part of the century saw the beginnings of autobiography.

The eighteenth century is the most important single century in the development of English Biography, which, at this time, became distinctly a literary art as well as a

highly popular form of writing. The Puritan Revolution and the Bloodless Revolution, followed by the Hanoverian Succession, brought about a consideration of the middle classes. It was a period of democratization--a time when the different classes of society were meeting at the theater, at the tavern, at the recreation centers like St. James Park or Vauxhall Gardens and at the seaside or country resorts; while the intelligentsia were meeting at "Will's", at "Truby's", at the "Cocoa-Tree" and at many other coffee and chocolate houses in London. It was an age of gossip, through the art of conversation, and it was an age for the exchange of ideas, through the medium of the newspaper and the periodical. There was a shift from the religious interests of the seventeenth century to the new political and social interests of the day. The common man had advanced in both social and mental culture, but at the same time the reading public had become much broader and thus there was a lowering of the level of appreciation.

The growth of Realism had its effect on biography as it cut down the tendency to eulogize and romanticize. The emphasis now was on the intellect rather than on the conscience as in the seventeenth century. Up to 1700 biographical writing had been limited in subject, almost exclusively, to the upper classes and it had been either

highly religious or didactic. The new century brought about a definite change; in biography, as in other things, it was a period of democratization. Many collections of biographies of middle class people appeared. There were "Lives" written about literary men, sea-captains, religious sects, such as the Puritans and the Quakers, and even about criminals. The purpose of eighteenth-century biography was largely to inform and to entertain. It satisfied the curiosity of the reader in the private lives of other men. The popularity of the drama in this period had its effect on biography, both in the many works about stage people and in the use of the dramatic method in biographical writing. And finally the growth of journalism produced the "hack-writers" of biography who introduced sensationalism for appeal to popular taste.

Significant publications in eighteenth-century biography were Roger North's Lives of his three brothers, notable for the attempt at life-like portraiture, which included all the "scars and blemishes", and William Mason's The Life and Writings of Thomas Gray, notable for its extensive use of the letters of his subject. The great literary biographers of the century, however, are Boswell and Johnson. Boswell's contribution to the art of biography is immense. His Life of Johnson is still considered by many

the finest biography written in any language and in any age. Boswell's artistry can easily be recognized in his method of biographical construction, which is a combination of narrative with other forms such as letters and conversation, his easy style, the reality of the scenes he depicts, and primarily in the keen analysis of the personality he portrays. "Not before had a biographer taken such pains to paint his man outwardly and inwardly."²

Samuel Johnson in his Lives of the English Poets which treated fifty-two poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, extended the range of biography by the inclusion of literary criticism, and he did much to divert the purpose of biography from moral instruction to appreciation through his attempts at truthful life-portraiture. In addition Johnson was one of the first writers to set forth his theories of biography, which appeared in his essays for "The Rambler" and also in his conversations with Boswell.

Oliver Goldsmith, outstanding in this period for the variety of literature he has produced, which includes essays,

² J. C. Metcalf, The Stream of English Biography, (New York, London: The Century Co., 1930), p. 25.

poetry, dramas and a novel, was the first real literary stylist to attempt biography. His style, particularly in the Life of Richard Nash, has been favorably compared with that of Walton, and his reputation as a biographer could have been greater, no doubt, had he not been forced to turn out his lives in such rapid succession to meet the demands of booksellers.

The first auto-biographies of note were published during the latter part of the eighteenth century--those of Benjamin Franklin (1762) and Edward Gibbon (1796).

By the end of the century a definite change and definite progress can be noted in life-writing. Biography has been set apart from History; thus the biographer is shifting from the narration of events to the interpretation of personality. Biography is becoming a literary art, as much through its change in purpose, as through its adoption of variety in method of presentation and the higher degree of its literary style.

The nineteenth century is outstanding in the amount of biographical literature which was published and in the variety of types. Most of the biographers of the early part of the century followed the pattern and style of

Boswell and the formal biography of this period is best represented by Thomas Moore's Life of Lord Byron (1830) and Lockhart's seven volume Life of Sir Walter Scott (1838). Toward the middle of the century there was a great amount of biographical writing which included critical essays, notably those of Macaulay and Carlyle, memoirs, portraits, sketches, and much confessional material in the way of conversations and letters. There was also a revival of the semi-historical "life-and-times" biography, particularly in the work of Thomas Carlyle who chose as the subjects of his biographies largely heroic personalities from the pages of history.

Life-writing in the latter part of the nineteenth century centered largely on literary figures. Typical of this period were the Life of Macaulay by George Trevelyan, and the Life of Dickens by John Forster. There were also many shorter biographies in collections such as English Men of Letters and Great Writers. Toward the close of the century the great Dictionary of National Biography was introduced. The first volume appeared in 1885 under the editorship of Sir Leslie Stephen. In 1891, Stephen was succeeded by Sir Sidney Lee who edited the work until 1916, when it was transferred to the Oxford University Press. The value of these dictionary lives, which now amount to

between thirty and forty thousand, as concise documentary accounts of important figures, can hardly be exaggerated.

The novelists of the nineteenth century greatly influenced the biography of their day. Biographers consciously imitated their character interpretation and their artistic methods of reconstructing life and the best biographies written in the late nineteenth century are much closer to life than those of the middle or earlier part of the century.

The late nineteenth-century progress in science had marked effects also on the biographical writing of that time. Darwin's theory of evolution and the new psychology of Freud had begun to concentrate attention on man's inner self. Biographers were attempting to use a more scientific, yet not less artistic, approach to the men whose lives they sought to re-create. Although life-writing in the nineteenth century ranged from the "confession-exposure" of the early period to the "propriety" of the Victorian period, and, in its development, included practically all types of biographical style and method, the trend at the close of the nineteenth century was toward a faithful transmission of personality. James Anthony Froude, in his two-volume Life of Carlyle, published in 1884,

anticipates many of the characteristics of the twentieth-century modern biography.

The aim of the twentieth-century biographer is to build a work of art by painting, (as Sir Edmund Gosse defines biography) "the faithful portrait of a soul in its adventures through life"; and Nicolson says:

"The problem which the biographer of the twentieth century has to solve is, therefore, that of combining the maximum of scientific material with the perfection of literary form."³

It can be easily seen, then, that the aim of modern biography is far removed from that of early life-writing up to the eighteenth century; but that it differs not so much in its purpose from life-writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as in its method and its style.

When the change occurred cannot readily be determined. Virginia Woolf⁴ feels that Froude's Life of Carlyle published in 1884 was the first radical departure in biographical writing, which type reached its height in the works of Lytton Strachey in the 1920s. Harold Nicolson⁵ believes that the publication of Edmund Gosse's Father and Son in 1907 marks the dividing line.

³ Nicolson, op. cit., p. 142.

⁴ Virginia Woolf, "The Art of Biography", Atlantic Monthly, 163: 506-10, April, 1939.

⁵ Nicolson, op. cit., p. 143-147.

It has been suggested too, that Frank Harris's Life of Oscar Wilde, which was written in 1912 (published in 1916) clearly anticipates the spirit of the modern school. Emil Ludwig⁶ implies that as early as 1911, in his psychological essay on "Bismark", he struck out the path which the "new biographers" follow; and that with his "Geothe", written in 1919, he crystallized a conception of biography which was to start a new European mode. Gamaliel Bradford's volumes of biographical portraits or "psychographies" in America definitely showed a new trend in biographical writing.

These conflicting arbitrary statements are interesting because they illustrate the impossibility of naming a birthday for that which is generally, though erroneously, considered a new literary genre. An examination of the life-writing of the past indicates that the twentieth century has not witnessed the birth of a new

⁶ Emil Ludwig, Gifts of Life, (Boston: Little Brown and Co., 1931), p. 217. "I had written in Bismark a psychological essay in which I had uncritically dissected the man's mind but did not reconstruct it."

In the Preface to Bismark Ludwig says: "....Instead of following the academic method, and burdening the portrayal with notes, we think it proper in our day to make public characters plastic.....The task of the artist is to construct a whole out of the data furnished by the investigator."

form; it has witnessed only the growth and fusion of forms which were alive, if not always active, long before the so-called "new biographers" were at work. For centuries the biography which is called "new" had been strengthening its roots underground, to emerge only when conditions were favorable to its growth.

By the end of World War I, and in part because of the war, the attitude toward human life and personality had reached a state in which the conception of biography which is conveniently, though inaccurately, characterized as "new" could readily flourish. The intellectual outlook of the first twenty years of the present century had, as its principal factor, a spirit of free inquiry that threatened traditional beliefs and time-honored customs. The new psychology proclaimed the complexity of the individual and the skeptical spirit of the time insisted on proving all things by a system of elimination and selection. This severe scientific scrutiny of human beings had a profound effect upon life-writing. The emphasis in biography shifted from outward events to the inner processes of causation. Character analysis became dominant in biographical writing.

The literary features and methods that belong to

contemporary biography are especially appropriate to the spirit of the times, but they are by no means new. They are only more active and more striking. Longaker states this most forcefully in a passage from a recently published review of contemporary literature, where he says, in part⁷:

Lytton Strachey's 'becoming brevity' is nothing new, nor is his irony....John Aubrey and Samuel Johnson are not such distant relatives of the modern school of brevity and irony....The private-life element so conspicuously stressed by contemporary authors, is as old as Tacitus; and the air of scandal which is an unhappy characteristic of so much of the modern school is as old as Suetonius. The frequently employed psychological method of the present age had exponents before there was such a word as psycho-analysis and before there was such a man as Freud....

However, in biography of late, there is a more consistent and deliberate attempt to humanize great men; there is more active experimentation with literary forms as attractive biographical mediums; and there is a wider more cosmopolitan point of view among life-writers.

What then are the outstanding characteristics of the "new biography"? The new biography expresses itself in the form of the novel or even in the form of the drama rather than that of history. However, in employing the methods

⁷ Mark Longaker, Contemporary Biography, (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press, 1934), p. 8.

of fiction, it does not produce works of fiction; it is accurate to the most minute detail. It never invents, but it does try to re-create. There is an emphasis on design with a conscious striving for unity. Chronological order is maintained by a skillful blending of episode and incident. The "new biographer" is essentially detached and dispassionate; he is neither a hero-worshipper, nor a detractor; he is an impartial, though an inquisitive and interested observer. His characters are ordinary human beings, because he wishes to portray them as such.

The style of the "new biography" is one of conscious and sustained brilliance; there is nothing careless about it. In an excellent article on this subject, George Johnston says:⁸

The new biography exploits every means of securing vividness. Epigram, paradox, irony, antithesis, rhetorical questions and obiter dicta, all serve to vivify the narration, to give it light and shade, to introduce color and sound.

The "new biography" also loves to paint brightly colored tableaux; its aim is to concentrate on brilliant images, on significant incidents or episodes, trivial in themselves,

⁸ George A. Johnston, "The New Biography; Ludwig, Maurois, and Strachey", Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 143, (March, 1929), p. 340.

but important for the comprehension of the character portrayed. But although the new biography uses images, it does not think in images. However episodic its structure may sometimes appear, the episodes are never isolated; they are always carefully coordinated. The writer simply omits most of the dull, humdrum, everyday occurrences and emphasizes the high lights.

The vogue of contemporary biography is not dependent on its air of apparent novelty, but on its appropriateness to the modern mind. The mind of the twentieth century reader is singularly responsive to and responsible for the kind of life-writing which flourishes. It is only by searching for the characteristics which lie imbedded in the contemporary mind that we can determine why the lives written by the modern school are enjoying such wide popularity.

The present-day reader often goes to biography because he is interested in himself. The growing interest in personality can be traced largely to man's attempt to know himself. The inner conflicts of others are now regarded as a mirror in which one's own struggles can be viewed clearly and with profit. Identification is sought, and in the comparisons which are drawn between the struggles

of others and one's own conflicts, there is much satisfaction. It is the same curiosity about self which leads men to the offices of psychoanalysts that causes them to read lives. The reader goes to the lives of others in order to find secret satisfaction in comparing his abnormalities with those of illustrious figures of history. In biography he finds not only an explanation for his singularities and inconsistencies, but justification and pardon as well.

It is too soon to determine the absolute worth of the new style of biographical writing; it is still in a state of development. On this subject Metcalf says:

It is the style, indeed, that gets a biography read and wins for it a permanent place in literature....Facts, transfigured by literary art, make great biography....How much of the new biography, spawned in such profusion, will be read fifty or a hundred years later, must depend quite as much upon its style as upon its truthfulness....The new biography though perhaps more accurate than the old, will also be saved by its art, or not at all....⁹

⁹ J. C. Metcalf, op. cit., pp. 48 - 49.

CHAPTER II

MAUROIS'S THEORIES OF BIOGRAPHY

André Maurois has clearly set forth his theories on biographical writing in Aspects of Biography, translated by Sidney Castle Roberts and published in New York (1929). This book is based on a series of lectures which he delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in May, 1928. In his Preface, Maurois explains why lectures delivered in English were published in the form of a translation.

....When I found that the notes I had used at Trinity needed to be entirely recast for publication in book form, I chose to make the revision in French and Mr. Roberts has been good enough to translate this revised version into English.

One can readily understand why Maurois was asked to express his views on biography at Cambridge at this time, if one bears in mind that it was in 1923, with the publication of Ariel, The Life of Shelley, that Maurois began to be numbered among the greater French writers. His second biography, the Life of Disraeli, had appeared in 1927. Both Ariel and Disraeli had been translated into English and were attracting the attention of English scholars and critics and the admiration of English readers.

Mr. E. M. Forster had treated "Aspects of the Novel"

as the subject of the Clark Lectures at Trinity in the preceding year and following his example, M. Maurois treated "Aspects of Biography", making no attempt to trace its history. The book is organized into six chapters (There had been six lectures). It discusses "Modern Biography," "Biography as a Work of Art," "Biography Considered as a Science," "Biography as a Means of Expression," "Autobiography," and "Biography and the Novel."

First of all, M. Maurois feels very strongly that there is such a thing as "Modern Biography", the characteristics of which are easily discernible. He sees a definite change and an advance in biographical writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, which was an inevitable reaction to the Victorian conventions of the preceding era.

"....Read a page of Victorian biography and then read a page of Mr. Strachey." says Maurois. "You will see immediately that you have before you two very different types. A book by Trevelyan or by Lockhart, apart from being constructed as perfectly as it can be, is above all things a document; a book by Mr. Strachey is above all things a work of art."¹

He feels that it is the perfection of art form which identifies the modern biography and sets it above that of

¹ Andre Maurois, Aspects of Biography, (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1929), p. 9.

previous centuries.

To explain the characteristics of twentieth-century biography, Maurois analyzes the intellectual revolution which came about at this time through scientific investigation, and the effects of this spirit of free inquiry upon the writers of biography. The first characteristic then, in his opinion, is the courageous search for scientific truth. He says that the modern writer of biography will not have his judgments dictated to him by preconceived ideas; he gets his general ideas from the observation of facts and these general ideas are afterwards verified by fresh and independent research, "conducted with care and without passion". He uses all the available documents, if they throw light upon a new aspect of the subject. "Neither fear, nor admiration, nor hostility must lead the biographer to neglect or to pass over a single one of them in silence," says Maurois.²

The author goes on to explain that this search for truth is not typically modern without the addition of the second characteristic--namely, the psychological approach to the "complexity of personality". Here, Maurois feels

² Ibid., p. 15.

that the psychologist, and through his influence, the biographer, followed the lead of the physicist who revealed the once indivisible atom as a system of electrons revolving around a central nucleus; so to understand an individual character, the psychologist realizes that it is made up of diverse personalities; and the biographer of today believes that it is impossible to understand the psychology of a human being without examining it from all sides and without going into infinitely small detail.

Maurois writes:

It would seem that the writers of our own day possess in greater degree than their predecessors a sense of the complexity and mobility of human beings and in a lesser degree a sense of their unity.³

The third characteristic which he recognizes as belonging to modern biography is its appeal to the twentieth-century mind, through the humanization of its subject. The modern reader searches to find others who have known his struggles and who share his troubles; and therefore he is grateful to the more human biographies which show him that even the hero is a divided being.

Thus Maurois sees that these three outstanding characteristics--the search for truth, the recognition of complexity of personality, and the humanization of the

³ Ibid., p. 27.

subject--combine with excellence of form, to make a biography that is scientific and yet a work of art. On these points, Maurois is in agreement with most of the writers of the modern school, especially Lytton Strachey, Emil Ludwig and Gamaliel Bradford; and it would seem that these three characteristics, mentioned here by Maurois, are the foundation upon which the modern biographers base their method.

Considering biography as an art, M. Maurois has definite opinions which, in most cases, apply to style and form. He compares the biographer to a portrait painter or a landscape painter, who must select the essential qualities in the whole subject which he is contemplating. The first choice, naturally, is that of a subject, which is the most important thing of all. Maurois feels strongly that there are some lives, notably those of Shelley and Disraeli, which, "either by chance or by some force inherent in their being" are somehow constructed like works of art. Most lives, however, do not contain the material, or at least the evidence of such material as would make them subjects for biographies of literary merit. On the other hand, Maurois feels that the life of every human being could be presented in an interesting fashion if the biographer had

access to all his innermost thoughts, through personal acquaintance, the testimony of friends and enemies, and personal documents.

Once a subject has been chosen, Maurois suggests certain rules by which the biographer can approach artistic form, while maintaining a respect for truth. The first rule is that of consistently following chronological order. He says that it is difficult to make a biography a work of art if the influence of events and people on the hero's character is not shown progressively. He feels that it is not the business of the biographer to anticipate the events of his subject's life, but that rather he should try to see the action of the life as it develops through the hero's eyes, and relate it in this fashion. The second rule would apply to the choice and presentation of details. The biographer should accumulate all the available facts about the person's life, writes Maurois, but then he should take stock of his knowledge and choose what is essential. Through this process of selection, he produces an artist's work. He stresses, however, that the biographer should not lose sight of the fact that the smallest details are often the most interesting and that anything that can give the reader an insight into the personality of the subject--his physical appearance, the tone of his voice, familiar

gestures, the clothes he wore--that thing is essential. He feels that vividness of detail makes forceful biography.

As a last evidence of the artistic value of biography, Maurois says that the great biographer is on a level with the great poet and the great musician, if he can recognize in the life of his hero a certain pattern or motif, and can skillfully portray this in his work. He writes:

"....Poetry, in a wide sense, I conceive to be a transmutation of nature into some beautiful form made intelligible by the introduction of rhythm. In poetry, in the stricter sense, this rhythm is established by the verse form or by rhyme; in music, by the motif; in a book by the recurrence, at more or less regular intervals, of the essential motifs of the work...."⁴

He feels that Lytton Strachey is a master of this poetry of life. In his own works he points to the water motif in the life of Shelley and to the flower motif in the life of Disraeli.

One can see then that, to Maurois, the artistic value of a biography rests heavily upon its method and upon its style.

From a discussion of biography as an Art, Maurois proceeds to discuss biography considered as a science. Here he divides his subject into two parts; the first part

⁴ Ibid., p. 71.

concerns the possibility of acquiring the truth about a man and the second part concerns the possibility of portraying the truth about the period in which he lived. The materials at the disposal of the biographer for the discovery of truth about his subject are, of course, the works of those who have previously written about him, his personal documents such as letters or diaries, the memoirs of his contemporaries, and if he was a writer, his published or unpublished works. Each of these has its merits and its defects. Previous biographies will vary according to the opinion and point of view of the individual writer. Diaries, though self-revealing, are rarely available and often fragmentary. Letters and records of actual conversations, of great value in most cases, are sometimes contradictory; for people consciously present completely different personalities to suit their relations with others. Memoirs of contemporaries are of high value, because they reveal what the subject was in the eyes of men who actually knew him; but here again there will be variety and often contradiction according to the relationship of the writer to his subject. It will be admitted that, in the case of a literary figure, the man will have revealed much of himself in his works; nevertheless, the biographer must use care not to attach an autobiographical significance to all that the man has written.

The second part of the subject, concerning the discovery of truth about the era in which the subject lived, presents almost as many problems, depending again mainly upon individual opinion and point of view. The biographer takes an individual man as a central figure and makes the events of the period begin and end with him, or revolve about him--in this way he cannot and does not wish to relate all the history of the time; but he can and should show the effects of the period on the man or the effect of the man on his period, thinks Maurois. Summing up he says:

....The truth is that the nearer we press toward actual facts, the more clearly we see that biography cannot be treated like physics and chemistry.....⁵

To the question, "Ought biography to be a science?" Maurois replies:

We might as well ask whether the portrait painter ought to be a scholar. The reply is obvious; the portrait painter should be a man of integrity; he should aim at a likeness; he should know the technique of his craft; but his objective is the painting of an individual, whereas science is concerned only with the general. [*italics in the original*]⁶

Most of the present day writers feel, as Maurois does, that biography cannot be considered as a science,

⁵ Ibid., p. 96.

⁶ Ibid., p. 112.

although it can, and should, employ the scientific method in its search for truth.

A further treatment of biography as an art is the bulk of the chapter on "Biography as a Means of Expression" for to Maurois art is, above everything else, a deliverance. He writes:

The artist is a being who in the course of his life has accumulated emotions for which he has not been able to find any outlet in action. These emotions swell within him and fill his soul almost to the bursting point; it is when he feels the urgent need of freeing himself that the work gushes out from him with an almost spontaneous force. Art is for him a means of expression.⁷

Maurois, in great detail relates how he came to write the life of Shelley. He felt that the English poet had experienced reverses somewhat in the nature of those of his own youth and that to tell the story of Shelley's life would be in some way a deliverance for himself. The statesman, Disraeli, also offered a means of self-expression, for the author had chosen a subject to satisfy a secret need in his own nature.

Maurois realizes that scarcely is it possible for the entire life of the hero to coincide with that of the writer--that it is merely one aspect of the life which he

⁷ Ibid., p. 115.

discovers, and at times, a very limited aspect. He also realizes that this method of using biography invites the criticism of "undue subjectivity" (as Nicolson puts it). Further Maurois admits the danger in this type of biography--namely, that of unwittingly defacing truth by constructing a hero according to one's own needs and desires, but he feels, nevertheless, that in those cases where heroes lend themselves to such treatment, the biographer is able to express some of his own feelings without misrepresenting those of his hero.

"There is only one argument in its favor," says Maurois, "but that is all powerful; there is no other method.we cannot understand a human being by an exhaustive compilation of detail, We get our understanding by a coup d'etat.⁸ [*italics in the original*]

On this question of "deliverance" and "self-expression," Maurois has been most severely criticized, for as a motivating force in biography, it is prone to incline the author too definitely toward the novelist's method of creating reality. In addition, the biography which results is often fragmentary, since the biographer must generally be satisfied with only a partial deliverance. Lastly, it does make for subjective or "romanticized" biography.

⁸ Ibid., p. 133.

He goes on to say that the reader also seeks in biography a means of expression. For as the biographer likens himself to his hero in order to understand him, the reader does so in order to imitate his actions. Consequently, biography more than any other type of literature touches close upon morality. Maurois explains this by saying that any work of art, in so far as it arouses the emotions and thereby the desire to act, touches upon morality--and in biography this influence upon conduct is strong. However, he warns that for the full expression of this sublimated morality, the biographer must never consciously think about morals; and he says:

.....All moral preoccupation in a work of art kills the work of art.....But that is not to say that great moral themes cannot be the very stuff of the work.....I believe that the same might apply to a great biography.⁹

Generally, M. Maurois is to be commended for the absence of "the moral tone" in his biographies.

In the next chapter on "Autobiography" which is excellent, André Maurois challenges Samuel Johnson's statement that "Every man's life should be best written by himself," by setting forth six main causes which tend to make autobiographical narrative inaccurate or false.

⁹ Ibid., p. 144.

The first cause is the fact that we forget. When a man attempts to write his own life story, unless he has written records, he is in danger of omitting whole periods of his life--at least those of his childhood.

The second factor is deliberate forgetfulness on esthetic grounds. If an autobiographer is also a gifted writer, he is tempted to make his life story a work of art. This he does by omitting the commonplace things and by playing up the striking ones. The third cause is the perfectly natural censorship which the mind exercises upon that which is disagreeable. The writer will remember those things which he wants to remember and try to forget that which has hurt him, or he will consciously change them to meet accepted standards. The fourth cause, closely connected to the third, is that censorship which is prompted by a sense of shame. If the autobiographer feels that he cannot tell the real truth about a subject or event, he will create a life more in keeping with his desires, but he will say that it is his own. The fifth factor is that of rationalization. Often an autobiographer depicts feelings or ideas which might have been the cause of a certain event, but which really were invented by him after the event took place. This is especially true of the autobiographies of military men and politicians. The last

cause for lack of sincerity is the perfectly legitimate desire of the autobiographer to protect his friends. Allowing that he chose to reveal himself by telling the whole truth, he would not assume the right to so reveal others.

Thus Maurois says:

...When we attempt to draw our own portrait for other people, we must not be surprised if the portrait is not accepted as a likeness.¹⁰

However, he cites as examples of entirely satisfactory autobiography Edmund Gosse's Father and Son, The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford, and those of Gibbon, Newman, Herbert Spencer, and John Stuart Mill.

In 1941, Maurois wrote his autobiography I Remember, I Remember, which quite successfully avoids the pitfalls mentioned above.

In his consideration of "Biography and the Novel", Maurois compares and contrasts the "pattern", the "story", and the "characters" of biography with those of the novel as treated by Mr. Forster in his lectures of the previous year.

Concerning the "pattern", or quality of arrangement,

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 174.

Maurois feels that the biographer is in a more difficult position than the novelist on the point of composition. The novelist can pick and choose combinations of events which fit his plan; but the biographer, except in rare cases, is obliged to take over a shapeless mass of facts and construct from them a work of art.

As to "story", Mr. Forster had said that the first quality of a novel must be to compel the reader to want to listen, and to listen to the end. In the opinion of Maurois, the ability of a biography to form a story as continuous and as interesting as the novel, depends on the choice of subject. There are lives which are constructed like novels and he gives as examples those of Disraeli and Meredith; there are others which contain highly interesting episodes, but too few of them for adaptation to a continuous narrative; on the other hand, there are those lives which are too colorless and monotonous to maintain the reader's interest.

Mr. Forster, in discussing the characters, had distinguished carefully between man as he is in real life, Homo Sapiens, and man as he is in the Novel, Homo Fictus. To these two species, Maurois adds a third--man as he is in biography, Homo Biographicus. The three are contrasted

effectively. Homo Sapiens is primarily occupied with food, work, and occasionally, with love; Homo Fictus, requiring little food or sleep, is tirelessly occupied with human relationships; but Homo Biographicus is always in action; he is always writing letters or governing empires. The man in real life reveals some of his thoughts and feelings in letters and conversations with his friends; the man in the novel is continuously talking or indulging in meditation which the reader is allowed to share; the man of biography talks little, never thinks when he is alone, but writes letters and memoirs--otherwise he practically ceases to exist.

Maurois admits the inferiority of biography to the novel on the point of attaining a synthesis of inner life and outward life, but he feels that it can be done successfully, for he says:

When Homo Biographicus comes into the hands of a clever doctor, the doctor can, by means of suitable injections, endow him with that inner life which characterizes Homo Fictus--and that without injury to truth.¹¹

Though he at no time makes a statement to the effect, one can easily see that, to Maurois, biography, written in a form usually considered that of the novel, comes closest

¹¹ Ibid., p. 203

to the goal of perfect life-portraiture. This is Maurois' major thesis.

Briefly then, Maurois holds that true biography is an art and that the biographer is an artist when he combines authentic facts with perfection of literary form; when he avails himself of all existing material on his subject and then, through a process of careful selection chooses the vivid details; when he so completely understands his subject that he can present him to the reader so as to make him real. Further, he hints that biography cannot be an art unless it is a means of expression or self-deliverance for the reader. He sees biography so closely related to the novel that it is possible to adopt its pattern.

Aspects of Biography is a significant contribution to the critical literature of life-writing and it is most valuable to anyone who would understand the Maurois method.

It will be necessary to examine the theories of M. Maurois in the light of those biographies which he has written. It will be well to bear in mind, however, that Aspects of Biography was compiled in 1928--five years after the appearance of Ariel (1923) and one year after the publication of Disraeli (1927).

CHAPTER III

ARIEL AND DISRAELI

In 1923 an event occurred in the development of contemporary biography. It was the appearance of André Maurois's Ariel, the Life of Shelley. This book and Disraeli, which followed it in 1927, made a place for Maurois in the field of biography. These first works have an historical value which can scarcely be exaggerated, for they started the vogue of "romanticized" biography. Despite Maurois's later convictions and theories, which he set forth in his Aspects of Biography, his name is associated largely with his earlier manner of life-writing, and Ariel and Disraeli are his most characteristic works.

The translation of Ariel into English was the most important step in Maurois's literary career. In the French it had provoked little interest, but once available in English, the book attracted immediate attention. The life of Shelley became known to hundreds of readers who had little interest either in poetry or biography--for it was a small book, more the size of a short novel than a "life" and it read like a novel. On the increasing vogue of biography, Ariel had a tremendous effect. Life-writing promptly described an upward curve. Maurois was called by his

publishers "the founder of a new school of romantic biography" and the fictionalized method for interpreting the personalities of the great, which was introduced by Maurois, came into its own.

Maurois gave considerable force to the rapid current which caused biography to drift toward the novel. The manner in which Maurois portrayed Shelley and Disraeli is responsible in large measure for the increasingly prevalent notion that biography should read like fiction.

Maurois himself has told what prompted him to write the biography of Shelley:

"From the time of my first visits to Oxford I had been thinking with eager interest about a Life of the Poet Shelley. It seemed to me if I wrote that Life I could give expression to certain feelings that I had experienced and that still troubled me. Like Shelley I had become a doctrinaire under the influence of my youthful reading and I had tried to apply rational methods to the life of the emotions. Like him I had encountered material that was alive and sentient and did not yield to my logic. Like him I had suffered and caused suffering. I was irritated at the adolescent I had been and also indulgent because I knew he could not have been otherwise. I hoped at once to expose him, to condemn him and to explain him. Shelley now, had met the same reverses with a hundred times more grandeur and grace, but for reasons that were very much the same.Yes, in every respect, the subject seemed excellent."¹

¹ Andre Maurois, I Remember, I Remember, (New York, London: Harper & Bros., 1942), p.135.

The facts to which Maurois here refers--his youthful enthusiasm for the social and political theories instilled into him by Alain² and the difficulties which he encountered when he tried to apply them both in the business world and in matrimony perhaps do not strike the reader as being strikingly similar to Shelley's early experiences; but Maurois felt that the affinity was such as to arouse a personal emotion within him. Thus he wrote Ariel as a means of self-expression and self-deliverance. Maurois goes on to say that he then read everything that had been published about Shelley, his correspondence and his poems, in order to write "a biography that would be, not the literary study of a poet, but the picture of a human conflict."

The main theme of the book is the minor tragedy that occurs when the serious-minded youth who has conceived of a marvelous plan to reform the world and make it a happier place in which to live comes into contact with reality, which obstinately refuses to fit in with his theories, or to conform to his systems. What Maurois sets out to show is that the youthful spirit of reform, idealistic as it may be, invariably comes to grief when it encounters cold, hard facts.

² Cf. post. Appendix A, p. 1.

Ariel, the Life of Shelley, is in form almost a novel; and it reads as easily and as entertainingly as a novel. One is carried along by the flow of clever conversations, graceful episodes and surprising turns of events--exactly as one would be by the imaginary plot of an entertaining piece of fiction. Mr. Maurois writes in a simple, clear and lucid style and does not try to impress the reader with his copious vocabulary. At times there are passages that stoop to the popular manner of expression, but the author no doubt felt that this manner of writing helped to humanize a great figure. Further, there can be little doubt that any work suffers somewhat through translation, and the places are few where the author does not display a mode of expression sufficiently dignified to suit his purpose.

In Ariel, Maurois has drawn with delicate sensitivity a comprehensive portrait of Shelley--his feverish energy, his spontaneous eagerness, his intellectual courage, and above all, his unstinting worship of beauty. He gives the reader a clear insight into the instability of Shelley's nature, his revolutionary philosophy, and his "misunderstood" actions. Mr. Maurois tried to present fairly and accurately the story of Shelley's life--neither condoning nor pardoning his actions, but actually by the time he came

to write the story of Shelley's tragedy, he was somewhat out of sympathy with the impractical ideals of the young poet--and there is, therefore, a somewhat ironical tone that permeates the biography. This vein of irony adds interest to the story, but at times it conveys the impression that the author is taking sides against his young hero. The title expresses the author's conception of Shelley as more of an engaging sprite than as a responsible human being and there is evidence that he intended quite consciously to conjure up about his subject an atmosphere at once ethereal and elusive. The facts of Shelley's life are given with precision, but their motivation, however, is either so fantastic or so sublime that they seem to develop much more on the plane of a day dream than on the plane of earthly reality. Whether or not this half-ironical narrative fully accounts for the actual deportment of Shelley the man may certainly be questioned. Maurois asserts that there is not an unauthenticated line in Ariel and we must agree that the facts presented are perfectly exact and are based on reliable information. However, with Maurois's interpretation of the facts, the reader may not always be in agreement, for there is definitely a romanticized treatment--an intensified "self" in Maurois's Shelley.

In the choice of these established facts, Maurois gave exceptional prominence to those connected with women and love, and neglected more or less those related to poetry. He showed us Shelley the man, Shelley the sceptic, Shelley the lawbreaker; but he neglected Shelley, the poet. Certainly a story that nowhere accounts for the unique quality of a poet such as Shelley cannot be regarded as an adequate biography.

Interesting explanations and justifications have been offered for the incompleteness of the picture. We have been told that Maurois took the reader's knowledge of Shelley's poetry for granted; that the poet's best work was widely known and so needed no explanation; that it was both unnecessary and presumptuous for a Frenchman to present the genius of Shelley to a class of readers who were already quite familiar with his poetry. We have been told also that the Gallic mind does not cherish the English sense for completeness.

"The French" writes David Larg in justification of Maurois's portrait of Shelley, "have not our large way of jumbling things together. If they, mean to be "sérieux" they read the Journal de Debats, and if they mean to be "frivoles".....they scamper through the female frescoes of the Vie parisienne..... So a biography is a biography to them and not an anthology."³

³ David Larg, André Maurois, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 84.

The fragmentary kind of portrayal in Ariel may satisfy the Gallic mind, but to most readers it is not satisfying, because it is not relatively complete. A Life which is written to portray a phase of a man's life should be named clearly as such for the benefit of those readers who are not always aware of the many-sidedness of his personality. The inadequacy of Ariel as biography is largely a by-product of the author's search for that which he called deliverance. Accepting Maurois's theory of affinity to a subject being necessary in the writing of a Life, it must be admitted that a biographer never discovers the whole of his own character in the character of another.

After giving his readers the picture of a romantic young man, had Maurois given some interpretation of this same young man as the author of some of the most exquisite lyrics in the language, then his biography would be more true and real. No appreciative reader of Shelley can ever believe that the Shelley of Ariel is an adequate portrayal. However, the defects of the book, almost as much as its merits, contributed to make it an instantaneous success.

Maurice Roy, a French critic wrote in 1934:

"Le public se trouva que le livre de M. André Maurois avait les traits d'une oeuvre romanesque, l'ampleur d'une vie d'homme, et la profondeur d'une analyse psychologique."⁴ [*italics not in original*]

⁴ Maurice Roy, Andre Maurois, (Paris: Editions de la Caravelle, 1934), p. 51.

And another critic wrote:

"M. Andre Maurois sut trouver une forme de biographie à la fois sérieuse et légère, aisée à lire et substantielle. Il se fit ainsi une réputation mondiale et une future littéraire."⁵
[italics not in original]

It is evident then that these two men would not share the opinion of most critical readers today who feel that Ariel is fragmentary.

To the next criticism that it is "romanticized" biography, M. Maurois himself takes exception. As late as 1941, he wrote:

Finally, in 1923, my Life of Shelley was finished.....Charles Du Bos, who read the manuscript, advised me to add an introductory note to indicate to the critics what I had tried to do. I listened to him and no doubt this was a mistake, for from this brief preface was born, much against my intention, the absurd and dangerous expression; romanticized biography. I had never used it. I had on the contrary said that a biographer has no right to invent either a fact or a speech, but that he might and should arrange his authentic materials in the manner of a novel and give his reader the feeling of a hero's progressive discovery of the world which is the essence of romance.⁶

⁵ Bernard Fay, Litterature Francaise, p. 228, cited by Maurice Roy, loc. cit.

⁶ Maurois, op. cit., p. 149.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
JANUARY 1, 1900

TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
FROM THE FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

RESOLUTION

Resolved, That the Faculty of the University of Chicago

do hereby express their appreciation of the services of

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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However, if a book is to be presented as a faithful account of a man's life and that book does not portray that man's life as it actually was, then the account cannot be considered "true biography". It matters little whether it be called "romanticized", "fictionalized", or "novelized" biography, Andre Maurois's Ariel, the Life of Shelley, because of its form and also because of its fragmentary nature, must of necessity be put outside the circle of "pure" biography and into a class by itself.

The success of Ariel left little doubt in Maurois's mind about the literary path which he was to follow. Biography was his province. Life-writing was no longer to be only a means of self-deliverance to him; it was to be a profession. He has so revealed his purpose in his autobiography where he writes:

My other and more important work was a life of Disraeli. Where had I come upon that idea? First in a comment by Barres; 'The three most interesting men of the Nineteenth Century are Byron, Disraeli, and Rosetti.' This gave me the idea of reading the life and works of Disraeli. They filled me with enthusiasm. In him I found a hero after my own heart."⁷

In addition, the story element in Disraeli's life evidently was satisfying--for again the author found a subject whose

⁷ Maurois, op. cit., p. 173.

life could be made to read like a novel. As a contribution to the development of biography, the method employed in Disraeli is essentially that of Ariel; but the literary style of the former is on a higher level. Disraeli is a better piece of writing. It illustrates more clearly than his earlier work what the fictional approach can do for biography. Maurois's second excursion into the province of Life-writing was promptly acclaimed; and some of the critics who had looked upon Ariel with suspicion were now enthusiastic about the Maurois method.

The problem dealt with in La Vie de Disraeli is similar to the problem treated in Ariel--the conflict between idealism and reality. But in the life of the British statesman, Maurois proposed to answer the question of what happens to the young romantic who does not die before the age of thirty; and who comes to reconcile the dreams of youth with the life which he is forced to lead in his maturity.

In the case of Disraeli, the question of the personal bond between the writer and his subject is at once more simple and more complex. Emile Herzog had occasionally had to contend with the same anti-Jewish prejudice that had impeded young Disraeli when he tried to win his way into English society. This created a link between the two

personalities. Then again, Maurois's political theories, in which conservatism--the outcome of a provincial environment and family tradition--mingled with the progressiveness of the revolutionary socialistic doctrines of Chartier⁸ (by whom he had been strongly influenced), had actually much in common with the Tory democracy of Lord Beaconsfield.

"Since I was myself unable for manifold reasons to lead a life of political activity" says Maurois, "I derived a passionate pleasure from participating in that struggle behind the mask of a political figure that so appealed to me."⁹

Lastly, it is clearly revealed in his autobiography, as well as in his novels, that Maurois has always been on the one hand a romantic idealist craving a full, free existence; on the other hand he has been a man of experience, well aware of the restraints of practical life. The same contradictory elements were present in the character of Disraeli. That Maurois felt in sympathy with his hero is obvious. The tone of irony that characterizes the Shelley biography is not introduced into the Life of Disraeli. Maurois, in bringing to light the brilliant career of a man of his own race, enjoyed vicariously the very achievements by which he

⁸ Cf. post, Appendix A, p. 1.

⁹ Maurois, Aspects of Biography, p. 126.

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himself had set the greatest store, but which he had been unable in his own case to realize. The author himself says that he has never written a book with greater pleasure.

Maurois has recorded, with great accuracy and honesty, the life story of a man who rose from obscurity and insignificance to fame and honor through his own untiring perseverance; and he portrays skillfully the celebrated leader's part in the history of England's Victorian Age. The author moreover, displays good taste and discretion in his representation of Disraeli's private life. In this respect the book is a masterpiece wherein the personal elements and public achievements are cleverly blended into a consistent and harmonious whole. The book is founded on incontestable documentary evidence and upon an intimate knowledge of all the characters, of their historical setting, and of the society in which they lived and moved. Imaginary dialogues, such as enlivened Ariel, have no place in the Life of Disraeli. Although the emphasis is on the success story of a man who had everything against him, Maurois's biography is definitely not panegyric. The author sees the bad points of his subject and makes them clear to the reader.

Shelley suffers by reason of the incompleteness of

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of the portrait; Disraeli suffers in the same way, but not nearly to the same extent. The life has a slightly episodic quality, particularly in the latter part. Maurois covers Disraeli's childhood rather superficially; but such a criticism might be made of almost all biographies. It is understandable, for it is due no doubt to the dearth of source material. The young Disraeli Maurois treats of at considerable length, giving much description of his dress, his attitude toward women, his ambitions, and his early writings. Of the mature and old man, the reader catches only occasional glimpses. This latter part is constructed more as a succession of tableaux, designed to stress social and political incidents of triumph. Disraeli's later writings are not sufficiently covered. However, although Maurois dwells at great length on the pronouncedly human features of the man and his character, the political, social, and literary features which contributed to his greatness are not neglected. The author follows a strictly chronological order as is his practice, and, on the whole, there is a clever coordination of images, episodes, and events.

In La Vie de Disraeli, Maurois reached what may be called his height of literary composition, for here the essentials of biography are combined with the design of the

drama and the narrative and descriptive power of the novel. There is skillful blending of source material, strong dramatic effect and excellence of character portrayal throughout. The book has been written with considerable artistry. The style of the English version, probably owing to the fact that the translation went into different hands,¹⁰ is of a higher level than that of Ariel--but even in the original French, one can note the definite superiority in the phrasing and choice of words.

Where Ariel suffers from its "undue subjectivity" and thereby invites just criticism, the Life of Disraeli profits by the personal bond between the author and his subject. The latter work Maurois wrote with deep feeling and understanding; and much of its literary merit is due to this "identification of self" which was far more genuine than was possible in the case of Shelley. A few examples may serve to make clear the opinion here presented--that the literary worth of La Vie de Disraeli is due in great part to the urge for the expression of emotions felt by the author himself as identified with those of his subject. One can easily see the similarity

¹⁰ Ariel had been translated by Ella D'Arcy; Disraeli was translated by Hamish Miles, who did most of Maurois's translations from that time on.

between the two excerpts which follow; the first, from Maurois's autobiography:

Ce fut un tel jour de Noël, alors que j'avais déjà cinq ou six ans, que j'appris par un autre enfant, mon voisin dans ce temple, que mes parents étaient juifs, et que c'était la un trait suprenant.¹¹

and the second from La Vie de Disraeli:

Là, a l'école un fait suprenant lui fut révélé. Il n'était pas de la même religion, de la même race, que ses camarades. C'était difficile à comprendre. Pourtant la maison de Ben....était un maison anglaise. Son père....était un écrivain anglais. Ben avait appris à lire dans des livres anglais, les chansons qui avait bercé son sommeil était des chansons anglaises, mais là, dans cette école, on lui faisait sentir qu'il n'était pas pareil aux autres. Que c'était obscure.....¹²

Both descriptions are of episodes almost identical in nature, but the composition of the latter is superior because, by its style, it arouses strong feeling; whereas the former is merely a factual narration.

¹¹ Andre Maurois, Memoires, (New York: Editions de la Maison Françoise, Inc., 1942), p. 16.

¹² Andre Maurois, La Vie de Disraeli, (Paris: Gallimard, 1927), p. 17.

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Maurois confesses that Disraeli's long devotion to his wife was the perfect image of the life he had himself hoped for, and which was denied him. In his life of Disraeli, Maurois therefore portrays with delicate sensitivity the appealing love story of Disraeli and Mary Ann, a widow twelve years older than he. The reader is given an amusing, but thoroughly sympathetic, picture of Mary Ann, who talked too often and too much, and who always said the wrong things; but this is far in the background of the portrait of the love-marriage of a man who said he would never marry for love. Here again, Maurois's feeling of identification seems to have influenced his style.

Maurois's keen character analysis is revealed no less in the continuity of the narrative than in the subtle remarks inserted here and there throughout the book. With regard to Disraeli's charming manner with women and the effect of this on his political success, Maurois says, "Combien Disraeli a de chance que l'Angleterre ait une reine et non un roi."¹³

¹³ Ibid., p. 267.

In another place Maurois writes:

Un jour les Grecs a la recherche d'un Roi ont offert la trône a Stanley. Stanley qui n'est pas Byron a refusé. Ah! si on avait offert le trône de grâce a Dizzy!¹⁴

Any writer would be taxed to find a better choice of words and to put them into three sentences, which would more clearly reveal Disraeli's greatest sin--ambition.

The reader is not only given a picture of Disraeli. No less complete is the character portrayal of the other actors in the life-drama. Outstanding perhaps is that of Mary Ann and that of Gladstone. In one place in particular--when Gladstone and Disraeli are contesting for political supremacy--there is a brilliant passage of about three or four pages--approximately one hundred lines of superb writing, characterized again by the subtlety of Maurois where he writes that Disraeli didn't mind if Gladstone acted as if he had the Ace of Trumps up his sleeve, but he resented Gladstone's attitude that God had put it there. The last sentence of the section is particularly striking. "Disraeli etait sur que Gladstone n'etait pas un Saint, mais Gladstone n'etait pas sur que Disraeli ne fut pas le Diable."¹⁵

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 219.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 209.

Perhaps no better evidence of Maurois's ability to produce dramatic effect could be found than the concluding paragraph of this biography:

"Non, Disraeli était bien loin d'être un saint. Mais peut-être comme un vieil Esprit du Printemps toujours vaincu et toujours renaissant, et comme un symbol de ce que put accomplir, dans un univers hostile et froid, une longue jeunesse de coeur."¹⁶

La Vie de Disraeli when compared to Ariel is in all respects superior. The method, essentially that of the earlier work, has been improved upon and the style is more polished. The Life of Disraeli is more in keeping with the aims of true biography; yet it shows clearly the advantages of the fictional approach to Life-writing. If its appeal to the average reader is not so great as is that of Ariel, the reason must of necessity lie in the fact that Shelley, considered both as man and poet, would attract a greater number of readers than would Disraeli, the Jewish Prime Minister at the court of Victoria. Further it must be remembered that when Ariel appeared in 1923, it was a radical departure from the biographies which had followed the pattern of the traditional method--and this in itself would have been enough to cause it to be widely read. It is rather unfortunate that when Maurois is mentioned as

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 337.

a biographer, the title Ariel first comes to mind; for to the discriminating reader, La Vie de Disraeli is better biography and basically better literature.

In employing the form of the novel for his first two biographies Maurois chose to avoid any and all interruptions which might serve to detract from the continuity of the narrative. In Ariel, there were no footnotes, no acknowledgments, no references to any kind of sources. As might be expected, this serious omission received immediate and widespread criticism. With this criticism of Ariel still fresh in his mind, Maurois makes a statement in the Preface to Disraeli which reads in part:

Les usages de cette collection ne me permettaient pas d'indiquer au bas de chaque page mes références; on trouvera au moins ici la liste de principaux ouvrages dont je me suis servi.....

He goes on to acknowledge the information derived from the principal texts used--namely Monypenny and Buckle's La Vie de Disraeli, Halevy's Histoire du Peuple Anglais au XIX^e Siecle, and the assistance he received from a M. Gabriel Hanotaux, who helped him better understand the political issues involved and Mr. Desmond McCarthy, who was the source of many revelatory anecdotes. There are, in addition, seventy-five references listed in the bibliography. But specific references by way of footnotes are still not

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included, for evidently Maurois felt that the explanation set forth in his preface was sufficient.

Again criticism was forthcoming and in 1928, at about the time that the name of Andre Maurois had been suggested for election to the Academie Francaise, there appeared a virulent article, published in a Paris periodical, which charged Maurois with plagiarism. The article, which bore the signature of Auriant, was so forcefully and convincingly written that, although it was later the consensus of most fair-minded critics that Maurois was not guilty of the charges made, there can be no doubt that it influenced the electors and Maurois was denied admission to the Academy.

The article attacks in rapid succession, Maurois's purpose, his method and his style.

"Thanks to him", says Auriant in translation, "plagiarism can be considered one of the fine arts.....for his novelized 'lives' are nothing more or less than abbreviated translations."¹⁷

He goes on to say that Ariel ou La Vie de Shelley was

¹⁷ Auriant, "Un Écrivain Original. M. André Maurois", Mercure de France, Vol. CCII, No. 713, March 1, 1938, pp. 298-323, cited as "The Originality of M. Andre Maurois", Living Age, Vol. 334, April 15, 1928, pp. 726-732.

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nothing but an abridged version of Dr. Dowden's book on the same subject; he says further that the Vie de Disraeli had been plundered from Monypenny and Buckle's Life of Benjamin Disraeli. The article continues to say that the comparison of texts not only reveals the plagiarism committed by Maurois, but also it shows that the original is much more effective than the copy. "Mr. Maurois deforms and disfigures everything he touches," says Auriant. Concerning Maurois's method, the critic says that it is childishly simple for it consists in getting the best biography of the person whose life he is going to novelize from the Dictionary of National Biography and arranging it in French. He characterizes the style of Ariel and Disraeli as careless and he says that Maurois's only purpose was to hit upon an original manner and to popularize it skillfully.

Maurois retorted that he had indeed consulted the books mentioned, but that he had been indebted to them no more than to many other sources of information; further that he had taken from these sources only well-known facts.¹⁸

¹⁸ Andre Maurois, "Une Lèttre", Mercure de France, Vol. CCII, No. 715, April 1, 1928, pp. 55-73, cited Living Age, Vol. 334, June, 1928, pp. 954-5 as "Maurois Replies".

The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the English language. It is noted that the English language has a long and rich history, and that the study of its development is essential for a full understanding of the language. The paper then goes on to discuss the various factors that have influenced the development of the English language, including the influence of other languages, the influence of social and cultural changes, and the influence of technological advances.

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Meanwhile there were many communications to the Mercure de France in regard to the plagiarisms of Andre Maurois and other parties were drawn into the quarrel. Frank Harris affirmed that sections of Maurois's essay on Oscar Wilde, in Etudes Anglaises, had been copied from his own book, Oscar Wilde, His Life and Confessions. On the other hand, Edmund Gosse, in a letter to Maurois which the latter had published,¹⁹ testified to the completeness, genuineness and originality of Maurois's writings when he said, "The originality of your critical position.....is what particularly strikes a candid reader." Eventually the excitement subsided and it was generally agreed that in no case had Maurois's methods of documentation violated the strictest rules of literary ethics.

Ariel, ou La Vie de Shelley and La Vie de Disraeli then, may be considered as important from a historical standpoint in the development of modern biography, because in the first place, they influenced, if not actually started, the trend toward romanticized biography; and secondly because they illustrated what the fictional approach can do for biographical writing. Further, they, and not Maurois's

¹⁹ Sir Edmund Gosse's letter is quoted in "Une Lettre de M. André Maurois", Mercure de France, Vol.CCIII, No. 717, May 1, 1928, p. 718, cited as "More Maurois" in Living Age, Vol. 334, July, 1928, pp. 1094-5.

later works (Byron in particular) may be considered as the most typical and characteristic of the Maurois style and method of writing "lives".

CHAPTER IV

BYRON

Maurois's Ariel and his Byron illustrate two widely different conceptions of life-writing and of the two, the conception which directed the life of Byron is the more satisfactory from the standpoint of the purpose of true biography. Six years had elapsed since the publication of Ariel (1923); and during that time Disraeli had been written. One year after the publication of Disraeli, Maurois, in a series of lectures at Cambridge, had set forth his theories of biographical writing, which were later published in book form under the title, Aspects of Biography. Byron, which appeared in 1929 illustrates Maurois's change in point of view toward the value of biographical standards. It must be admitted that Ariel and Disraeli are the biographies most typical of the Maurois method, but Byron is a better piece of biographical writing.

It would seem that Maurois profited greatly from the mistakes of his early works; and that from the criticisms directed toward him and an analysis of their application to his life-writing, he formulated his theories of biography, which he applied so successfully in his life of Lord Byron. For here Maurois reached his height of biographical

composition. The life of Byron is superior in this respect to either Ariel or Disraeli, and also to the biographies which followed it. Evidences of the change in point of view of biographical standards may be noted principally in the change of method which Maurois reveals in Byron.

The extent and nature of the material employed in this biography are so convincingly displayed that even Auriant could find no cause for complaint concerning the author's indifferent scholarship. Here it could not be said that Maurois's method consisted of going to the Dictionary of National Biography in order to find a reference to a standard Life which he could novelize. With Byron bibliography Maurois was completely familiar. The exhaustive and systematically arranged appendices, and the life itself, indicate that the author consulted and skillfully employed the vast mass of materials concerning Byron. Lemaitre says that Byron worked for ten years on Byron's biography.¹

¹ George Lemaitre, Andre Maurois, (Stanford University Press, 1939), p. 67.

Referring to the amount of material used Maurois himself says:

Rarely has a biographer had at his disposal so many unpublished documents. Perhaps the book suffered from this artistically speaking, but I did not want to sacrifice anything. Hence the length of the work which is a defect.²

In addition to the desire for completeness, Maurois evidently also had in mind the double purpose of answering the critics' charges of plagiarism and "romantic tendencies". He has revealed this in his autobiography, published twelve years later, where he says:

Some critics found fault with me for having written (in Byron) not a living biography like that of Disraeli, but a thesis for the Sorbonne.....Be that as it may, so far as I was concerned, it produced one useful result; it killed the myth of romanticized biography.....This biography set the seal on my reconciliation with the scholars. Entrenched behind formidable parapets of notes and references, I could henceforth await them without fear.³

In the development of the personality of Byron, Maurois demonstrates a fine sense of biographical values. From the numerous sources of information, he selected, largely from the journals and letters of the poet, that which he believed best declared Byron's true nature.

² Andre Maurois, I Remember, I Remember, p. 196.

³ Ibid., p. 197.

Maurois's sense of selection is acute, despite the volume of the work.

Maurois portrays a Byron much less depraved than tradition has painted him. He sees him as a high-spirited youth, but by no means lacking in elevated sentiment and instinct. In fact, according to Maurois, Byron seems to have been searching for perfection of feminine purity, which he never ceased secretly to worship to the end of his life.

The humiliation of his crippled leg made Byron feel, at an early age, that he was singled out from other men for special inferiority and suffering. Already the victim of a dangerous heredity, Byron was imbued with the idea that, in his case, sin was unavoidable. In addition, the somber Calvinistic view of religion and predestination made Byron feel that everlasting damnation was his lot.

Maurois, however, makes the unfortunate love affair with Mary Charworth the dominating influence in Byron's life, for when he was repulsed by her, his character and his life took a new turn. At this point the over-sensitive lad took on the role of a skeptic and a cynic. As Maurois sees it, since Byron had suffered in his first experience of love all the aspects of humiliation, frustration and jealousy

combined, he then found a normal, ordinary life hopelessly flat. So Byron was condemned to eternal boredom, from which he could not escape except through further excitement and further passion, the very violence of which completely destroyed all moral self-control. Thus does Maurois explain his adventure with Caroline Lamb, his liaison with his half-sister Augusta, his misunderstanding with his wife, and his many affairs during his time of revelry in Venice.

The major elements in Byron's private life are treated sympathetically and yet impartially, without condemnation or justification. The reader is made to understand the clash of personalities which created the impossibility of success in Byron's marriage to Annabella Millbanke who became Lady Byron; the utter hopelessness and helplessness of his great attachment to Augusta Leigh (Maurois treats the incest question delicately yet frankly), and the many-sidedness of the affairs with Caroline Lamb and Teresa, the Countess Guiccioli. Maurois never loses sight of the higher aspirations in Byron, and the last part of his biography portrays him as the man of his true nature. His inner self at last found expression and complete fulfillment in heroic sacrifice, when a generous enthusiasm for Greek independence provided him with a motive, at once disinterested and elevated.

The general idea which the book seeks to convey is that disaster inevitably awaits all those who, like Byron, cast off convention and blindly follow their natural impulses. The disaster is not, Maurois thinks, the censure of society upon one who violates the social code, although the effects of such censure are by no means negligible. The real cause of the downfall is the internal conflict between uncontrolled instincts which are given free rein and the aspirations toward morality which exist deep down in men. If these aspirations are entirely thwarted, the fundamental balance of the mind is upset. Then the victim becomes afflicted with melancholy; suffers mental torture, though this may not be obvious outwardly; and at the end he generally meets with tragedy.

A prominent reason for the success of Byron, as biography, lies in the lack of undue subjectivity. Maurois had as his purpose the portrait of another man's life as an end in itself, rather than as a means of expression for his own experiences or desires. There is a personal link between Maurois's life and that of Byron if one wishes to search for it; but it is not so pronounced as to affect the entire work. Byron's life seems to have held some of the problems which Maurois himself had to face during the period of his first marriage, when he found himself tied

by the narrow traditions and strict conventions of the provincial town in which he lived. He has said that he often felt tempted to break all the accepted rules and gain personal freedom. Still more impatient than he was his gifted and brilliant wife, who resented the regulations of the small social and industrial circle to which she in no way belonged. She wanted to overlook the customs and to be really herself. That is precisely what Byron did--in very different circumstances of course, but in a spirit that Maurois could easily imagine and that he longed to re-create.

The life of Byron has neither the episodic quality of The Life of Disraeli, nor the fragmentary quality of Ariel. It is a thorough-going piece of work which leaves no consequential features of Byron's life and personality under-developed. The reference to poetry, neglected in the life of Shelley, though justifiably considered of secondary importance, is here adequately handled. In the preface Maurois writes:

A life of Byron is not a critical study of Byron's poetic worth, or his literary influence. I have pointed to the theme, but I have not treated it.⁴

Maurois indicates the worth of Byron's poetry and hopes that his treatment may send some readers, both English and French, who pass stern judgment on Byron's works without

⁴ Andre Maurois, Byron (New York: Appleton & Co., 1930), Preface, p. x.

knowing them, to read or reread the poems. As a complete, faithful, and engaging account of Byron's life and personality Maurois's work ranks high. It has the features which make for good biography.

In Byron, Maurois has incorporated all the merits of his two earlier biographical works and remedied their defects. To those readers and critics who considered Ariel a definitive biography of Shelley, the life of Byron would appear to be over-scholarly and at times over-detailed. Those readers and critics, then, are more interested in a novel than in biography. For Byron has the continuous narrative of Ariel, but not at the expense of completeness. The literary style is of the highest calibre and in itself reflects the careful discipline which Maurois employed in choice of words. There is deep feeling and understanding without undue subjectivity.

In the life of Byron are blended the best qualities of factual biography, with the artistry of the Maurois method. Thus far Maurois work as a biographer had been uneven. He had experimented and he had failed in some respects, but in Byron he succeeded. If Maurois had written nothing else in Biography, or even in the field of the novel, his Byron would earn for him a high place in development of contemporary literature.

CHAPTER V

LATER BIOGRAPHICAL WORKS

Maurois's later biographies do not attain the level of Byron, nor do they illustrate a method which is historically significant. Some of them are simple sketches, while others have developed into full-length books. Yet no one of them offers the same human interest as Maurois's earlier biographical productions.

One must admit the fact that good Lives come only as a result of consuming interest on the part of the biographer in his subject. Moreover, since biography is conceived by Maurois to be essentially a means of expression for the biographer himself, it is evident that the lives of very few men can be presented successfully. The number must be limited to those who have had experiences somewhat similar to the biographer's. The lack of personal affinity between Maurois and the other men whose life-stories he undertook to write may account for the indifferent quality of most of the remaining biographies. In those cases where similarity of experience is completely or almost completely lacking the biography is little more than a record of facts, which are objectively sound, but in which there is little warmth or personal appeal.

In 1927 Andre Maurois had written "Un Essai sur Dickens" which was published in Les Cahiers Verts. This sketch of Dickens and criticism of his works was not intended as a comprehensive biography of the English novelist. When it came about that the essay was to be translated into English (in 1935), Maurois wrote a Foreword in which he said that the French text had been simplified because of the publication of new documents in the interim. Maurois felt that other critics and biographers had presented the character of Dickens in an unpleasant light when they had portrayed him as vain, unjust, and hypocritical; and Maurois did not share their opinions. He clearly states his purpose where he says:

And now that the man and his works are being discussed these straightforward impressions of a foreigner on the most national of writers will perhaps interest some English readers.¹

One can see then that Maurois did not intend to write the life of Dickens, but rather a critical appraisal of Dickens's writings. And, indeed, the book is just that; for less than one-third of the text is given to the narration of the life-story of the subject. The first two chapters, or the first half of the book, are entitled "Life and Works"; Chapter III has for its title "Dickens and the Art of the Novel"

¹ Andre Maurois, Dickens, (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1935), Foreword.

and the last chapter treats "The Philosophy of Dickens".

The section on "Life and Works" gives the story of Dickens's life, but only in order to give the reader a better understanding of Dickens's writings. Against the background of the industrial England of the nineteenth century Maurois portrays the youth Charles Dickens, who found himself in his earliest years wrenched out of his class by poverty and thrown down to the lowest rungs of the social ladder. Maurois relates cleverly and sympathetically the well-known facts of Dickens's early childhood; he depicts Charles's life while his father was in the debtor's prison and the young boy was employed in a boot-blackening factory to help support the family. Further he shows clearly how these days of humiliation left unforgettable scars on the boy and aroused within him a sympathy for the poor and a craving to improve their living conditions.

When a small legacy enabled Dickens's father to leave the prison, Charles was able to resume his schooling, but only for a short time and then again he had to go back to work. Having tutored himself in shorthand he obtained a position in the Lord Chancellor's Court and then on a newspaper, "The True Sun", where he soon became known as one of the most conscientious reporters in London. It was at

this period of his life, at about the age of twenty, that he conceived the ambition to write. Maurois feels that Dickens entered into the literary world admirably prepared, because his exceptional childhood and youth had given him an insight into life and a thorough knowledge of men and their feelings.

"Really", says Maurois, "if his parents had wished to mould a great novelist and sought the best career for the purpose, they could not have planned one more ingenious and comprehensive."²

From this point on, the biographical sketch becomes largely the story of the literary development of the subject. The facts of Dickens's personal life which are important are not neglected; but they are definitely second in importance to his literary accomplishments and are brought forth only to make clear the characters and plots of the Dickens novels. The reader learns little of Dickens's wife, his children, or his home life; and not much is revealed of his friends or his social life. But those details of private life which are depicted are treated so well that they convey to the reader the impression that Maurois had available sufficient information to write a thoroughly comprehensive biography of Dickens, had that been his purpose.

It is rather obvious that there was little similarity

² Ibid., p. 19.

of experience between the life of Charles Dickens and that of Andre Maurois. However, Maurois saw in Dickens a man of action which he himself had wished to be and a man of great literary power which he someday hoped to be. He writes:

He [Dickens] died prematurely,....certainly from excessive work and excessive activity. There would be room for useful meditation on those lives which are given over, every moment to action....Those who possess this perilous gift of creation are scarcely ever able to use it in moderation....³

It was no doubt Maurois's great admiration for and vital interest in his subject which permitted him to give, in such a brief manner, a relatively clear portrait of the English writer.

Maurois has not confined himself exclusively to English Lives; he has written the life of Voltaire, the life of Chateaubriand, and the life of Marshal Lyautey--the French colonial governor of Morocco, as well as a critical analysis of Ivan Turgenev. However, those of famous Englishmen are by far the best of his biographical works.

Turgenev was the first Russian author to win a European reputation and, as in the case of Dickens, Maurois was more occupied in revealing his literary worth than in relating the story of his life. The book Tourgeniev was compiled from the text of four lectures given before

³ Ibid., p. 113.

"La Société des Conférences" in Paris in the Spring of 1930. In his Preface Maurois explains that the book is somewhat similar in nature to Dickens, when he says:

Je prie donc le lecteur de ne considérer ce travail, bien qu'il ait été fait avec soin, que comme une esquisse....Quant à la vie de Tourguéniev, j'espère que l'excellente biographie de M. Yarmolinsky sera quelque jour traduite....⁴

Maurois gives an adequate account of the environment of feudalism and class distinction of nineteenth-century Russia--the age in which Turgenev lived and of which he wrote. However, Turgenev's early life is more thoroughly treated than his later years. Maurois gives a clear picture of the home life of the wealthy family, dominated by the violent character of the boy's mother; and he describes the extensive education and study of the youth, who at the age of seventeen knew that he wanted to be a writer and had already begun his autobiography. The personal details of the later years of Turgenev's life, though well presented for the most part, are sketchily covered in some instances. The reader learns much about Turgenev's love affairs, particularly his passion for the married woman Pauline Viardot, the Italian opera singer; but he learns little of Turgenev's friendship with Tolstoy or of his

⁴ André Maurois, Tourguéniev, (Paris: B. Grasset, 1931), Note, pp. 10-11.

acquaintance with other writers, such as George Sand, Flaubert, Zola or de Maupassant. Moreover, one has the feeling that for these details, which provide a great part of the appeal of the book from a biographical standpoint, Maurois leans heavily on quotations and excerpts from Yarmolinsky's biography.

However, in his critical appraisal of Turgenev's writing Maurois displays his independent research. He gives a clear analysis of the social significance of Turgenev's novels, which were loud protests against the Russian system of serfdom. Further he shows a keen appreciation for the Russian's lyrical attitude toward nature and the romantic vein which permeated Turgenev's works and made them stand out in contrast to the stark realism of most of the Russian literature of the period. In addition Maurois reveals the intellectual perplexities of the man--his nihilistic doctrine, his militant materialism, his denial of all religious and esthetic values, and his frequent policy of "laissez-faire".

It would seem that Maurois appreciated Turgenev, the writer; but Turgenev, the man, held little appeal for him. Any link between the author and his subject is completely lacking. No doubt it is for this reason--the lack of

similarity of interest and experience--that the book has little personal appeal. As a lecture on Turgenev's writings, it would satisfy the student of Russian literature; but as the story of a man's life it lacks the interesting detail and fire of good biography.

Tourgéniev was published in 1931 and in the same year appeared the translation of Maurois's biography of Marshal Lyautey, which was written on the occasion of the Colonial Exhibition in Paris. Maurois was personally acquainted with the French militarist and during a trip to North Africa had had the opportunity of seeing for himself the outstanding achievements of this leader, who had directed the conquest and colonization of Morocco in the first decade of the twentieth century. Also in compiling the lengthy book, Maurois had access to the official reports and letters of Lyautey, which unpublished documents were placed at Maurois's disposal by the Marshal himself.⁵ As a result the biography presents a collection of facts, faithfully and vividly recorded and the narrative is authoritative and engaging, especially to those who are interested in the French colonies. However, the emphasis throughout

⁵ The biography is weighted down by the mass of quoted material from the Marshal's military correspondence.

the book is on the Marshal as a military man of action; and therefore, due to its one-sidedness, the biography suffers from the standpoint of complete revelation of Lyautey's character.

Hubert Lyautey was born in 1854 in Nancy, France. His paternal ancestors had for several generations been engaged in military service and the family were steeped in the tradition of the Empire. The young Lyautey was reared in a military environment and from an early age had had no other ambition than to become a great soldier of France. Maurois proceeds in great detail to relate the education at the academies and the later military service of his hero. The greater part of the biography is given over to the work of Lyautey as administrator of the North African colony of Morocco. For his exceptional work, Lyautey was elected to the French Academy in 1913, and in 1916 he was made Minister of War under President Briand. This post he resigned within a year and was given again his post in Morocco. In 1921 he was made a Marshal of France.

These are the facts around which Maurois builds his biography, for there is little of Lyautey's life outside the military aspect which enters into the narrative. Maurois had keenly desired for himself a life of action and

Lyautey was for him the expression of that desire. The Marshal had once said, "I felt that I was born to create, and I am creating; to rule and I am ruling; to stir up ideas, schemes, and tasks, and I stir them up by the spadeful."⁶ Maurois calls him a "romantic of action". Lyautey was still living when his biography was published.⁷ In the concluding paragraph the author writes:

I can easily see him ending up as Tolstoy did with a flight to the monastery. But he would instantly be the superior, the prior, the abbot. He would rebuild, transform, and issue orders.⁸

Maurois's biography is in a fashion little more than the illustration by examples of his definition of a great man. There is a sentimental appreciation which cannot be overlooked. It is the only one of Maurois's life-stories where his subject is treated eulogistically, for nowhere is

⁶ Andre Maurois, Lyautey, (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1931), p. 86.

⁷ Marshal Lyautey died in 1934.

⁸ Maurois, op. cit., p. 356.

there any indication that the hero had any faults. A French critic has said of the book:

On devine toute de suite la clause morale. C'est la question du bonheur qui place sur ces pages cette existence....

.....
Ce livre sur Lyautey est donc plus qu'une biographie; c'est une sorte d'essai sur le bonheur....⁹

Lyautey is certainly not a great biography for it does not give the reader a deep insight into the complete personality of the French conqueror. Here Maurois appears to be the "professional" biographer, writing to commemorate a national hero.

If Maurois appears to be a "professional" biographer in his Lyautey, he quite definitely becomes so in his next work--a life of Voltaire, which was written for the Appleton Biographical Series in 1932. Maurois evidently had little interest in Voltaire and therefore he did not exert much effort in writing his life. He had employed a thick volume of almost four hundred pages to narrate the life-story of Marshal Lyautey; but the life of Voltaire is related in a book of not quite one hundred and fifty pages, actually little more than a biographical sketch. The biography is too brief to treat adequately of the man who stands out as one of the greatest minds of the eighteenth century. For Voltaire was not only a man of letters and a philosopher;

⁹ Roy, Maurice, Andre Maurois, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

he was also interested among other matters, in science, industry, political economy, social reform, agriculture and philology. The whole of eighteenth century Europe may be found within his writings. Maurois, himself, says:

....that century, at once bourgeois and gentlemanly, universal and frivolous, scientific and fashionable, European and dominantly French was most fully reflected in the person of Voltaire who was in himself all of these things.¹⁰

Concerning Voltaire Dowden writes in his History of French Literature:

Seldom had such a coil of electrical energy been lodged within a human brain. His desire for intellectual activity was a consuming passion. His love of influence, his love of glory were boundless.¹¹

Here was a subject who could have provided the romance of Ariel, the power of Disraeli, and the adventure of Byron, but Voltaire has none of these; it is rather a superficial treatment of the man and his writings which leaves the reader more or less in doubt as to the purpose of the author. One point seems quite clear--that Maurois could not have had much respect or admiration for Voltaire the man, for the biography has a definitely superior and ironic tone. Much emphasis is placed on Voltaire's vanity and desire for recognition.

¹⁰ Andre Maurois, Voltaire, (New York: D. Appleton Century Co., Inc., 1933), p. 139.

¹¹ Dowden, Edward, A History of French Literature, (New York, Boston, Chicago, 1898), p. 288.

The details of Voltaire's life are given in fairly complete, if rather brief, fashion--his education with the Jesuits, his early writings, which because of their radical ideas resulted in imprisonments in the Bastille and at times enforced exiles, and his travels to England where he studied Shakespeare and met some of the contemporary English writers, such as Swift, Pope, Congreve and Gay. The reader learns of Voltaire's illicit love affair with Madame du Chatelet and the fourteen years spent with her at the Chateau of Cirey, his friendship with Frederick the Great and Catherine of Russia, his investments in the fields of business and of his old age at Ferney. Also Maurois gives a critical analysis of Voltaire's writings, his philosophy, and the subsequent quarrels with the authorities of Church and State.

Nevertheless, the reader does not acquire a penetrating insight into the character and personality of the French writer. One has the feeling that Maurois, whatever may have been the cause--lack of interest, lack of personal affinity, or lack of time--has written in Voltaire a superficial biography, which is in most respects inferior to his previous works. Here Maurois seems to be farthest removed from his conception of biography as an "art".

In 1933 another Maurois book, sometimes inaccurately

classified as biographical was published; in French it was entitled Edouard VII et son temps and the English translation became The Edwardian Era. However in his Preface, Maurois states his purpose thus:

I should like to make it clear to the reader that it was not my intention to write a life of King Edward, but to examine the various aspects of a recent and remarkable period of English history.

About one-sixth of the volume is given over to the biographical treatment of Edward VII, and a brief section to the life of Queen Victoria; but the book is largely an account of European politics in the period preceding World War I; and as such it has no place in a study of Maurois's biographical method and style.

André Maurois's latest biography is the life-story of Chateaubriand and he gives three reasons for this work, published in 1938. He writes:

The first reason was a great admiration for the writer, one of those who have exercised the most lasting and profound influence on French literature; the second, the desire to compare a French romantic with the English romantics I had studied and especially to find in Chateaubriand the original of which Byron was so often a copy; the third, a keen interest in that strange existence which found itself bound up with the whole history of France throughout the most dramatic period of that history.¹²

¹² André Maurois, Chateaubriand, (New York and London: Harpers & Bros., 1938), Introduction.

Chateaubriand is Maurois's best biographical work since Byron. It shows an artistic and literary ability not evident in Lyautey and scholarly research and technical perfection not evident in Voltaire. Once again Maurois was writing the life-story of a man in whom he was vitally interested; for here was one of his own countrymen--a French writer who was at once a romantic and a man of action. Rene de Chateaubriand had lived through the French Revolution, the Empire, and the Restoration; he had been banished by the Republic, admired by Napoleon, and made a minister to the court of King Louis XVIII; he had explored in America and had been a tutor in England; and he had been loved by some of the most beautiful women of his age. The Chevalier was a traveler, a soldier, a novelist, an ambassador, a religious writer, and a political publicist. Maurois had a wealth of information on his subject, made available by the Societe Chateaubriand in Paris and he has incorporated his source material into an entertaining and informative biography. No phase of Chateaubriand's character or personality is under-developed and his private life, his political endeavors and his literary works are adequately treated. The book is lengthy, but not unnecessarily so.

Francois-Réne de Chateaubriand was born in 1768 at

St. Malo, of an ancient Breton family. Except for the companionship of his elder sister Lucille, his childhood was solitary. He acquired a classical education at the College de Dol and then a commission in the army was provided for him. In Revolution days, he left France and set sail for America with the hope of discovering the Northwest Passage. Discouraged in his plans, he nevertheless traveled in the wilderness of the interior of the country and it was while he was there, viewing the majesty of nature, that he received the inspiration to write. Upon receiving news of the execution of Louis XVI he returned to France and then, after a hasty marriage to gratify the wishes of his family, he joined the royalist emigrants in London where he lived for seven years, until 1800. During his exile in London he began his first great book, La Génie du Christianisme an argumentative defense of Christianity, which was published in 1801--a few days before the celebration at the Cathedral of Notre Dame, of the restoration of peace and religion in France.

Largely because of this first book, Chateaubriand was launched on his political career, which had as its purpose the promotion of better relations between the French rulers and the Vatican. He was in turn, Minister to the Pope, Ambassador to Berlin and then to London, Minister of Foreign

Affairs and Minister to Rome under one government and then another. During these years of his life he was writing continuously. He had two ambitions--to become a great writer and to become a powerful figure in the government of France. In the first he succeeded admirably; but in the latter it was a case of one disappointment after another. For Chateaubriand was an egotist in continual search of praise and recognition and, although he possessed the knowledge and ability, he lacked the tact necessary to a diplomat. He had himself divided his life into three parts: The Traveler and the Soldier, The Man of Letters, and The Man of Action; but it was during the last years of his life that he did his greatest writing.

Maurois treats completely of the life-story of the French writer and the book is filled with interesting details and revelatory anecdotes. There is perhaps too much emphasis on Chateaubriand's "amours", but Maurois evidently felt that this phase of his life was so important as to be stressed.

"....it, was a remarkable fact", writes Maurois, "that Le Genie du Christianisme, which had power over so many minds was powerless to change the life or morals of its author...."¹³

Chateaubriand cannot be loved and his character cannot be admired without grave reserve; but Maurois has succeeded in

¹³ Ibid., p. 109.

presenting an impartial yet thoroughly sympathetic portrait of the man. The concluding paragraph of the biography is particularly dramatic and sums up the author's viewpoint very clearly. Here Maurois writes:

Spiritual conflict engendered by a difficult childhood, by the ideas of the age, and by the ills of his family; an artist fashioned by nature....and preserved intact by journeying; a romantic hero shaped by youth's disasters; further conflicts between that romantic hero and a classical intelligence; efforts to reconcile these conflicts in action, and following his defeat, their happy reconciliation through style; a vain attempt to make of his life a work or art....such was roughly the history of Francois-Rene de Chateaubriand.¹⁴

Andre Maurois has written other books which are partly biographical in nature, but should properly be classified as literary criticism. Therefore this study does not treat of them in detail. In 1927 was published Etudes Anglaises, which was a compilation of lectures on nineteenth and twentieth-century British literature. In 1932 Maurois wrote a critical essay on Proust and Ruskin which appeared in Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association, Vol. XVII.

Prophets and Poets, which was an examination of contemporary English writers--"those who have offered to their contemporaries not only aesthetic enjoyment, but also

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 345.

a philosophy"¹⁵--appeared in 1935 and included criticisms of Kipling, H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw, G. K. Chesterton, Conrad, Strachey, D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley and Katherine Mansfield. Études Littéraires, the first volume of which was published in 1941 and the second volume in 1944, was a critical appraisal of famous French writers such as Paul Valery, Andre Gide, Marcel Proust, Paul Claudel, Francois Mauriac, and Henry Bergson.

Maurois's latest book of this type is his Études Americaines, published in 1945. This presents American books and authors (others of different nationalities are included also) with the hope of awakening a desire in the French people to become interested in the study of "a young and living literature". The book includes Gertrude Stein, Dorothy Parker, Erskine Caldwell, and John Dos Passos, as well as Oscar Wilde, Henry James, Anatole France and Tolstoy.

During the summer of 1941, Andre Maurois was a member of the faculty at Mills College in California. On the occasion of Maurois's fifty-sixth birthday the students at the college had presented a sketch, in which the characters from his books had come to life. Maurois was deeply touched by the performance, so much so that it

¹⁵ Andre Maurois, Prophets and Poets, (New York and London; Harpers & Bros., 1935), Preface.

provided the incentive for his writing an autobiography.

In the introductory paragraphs he writes:

"There", I thought, listening to them with emotion, "there you have what is left of a life and a life's work."

A little later, when I had returned to my room, it occurred to me that a legend sometimes survives as well as a surprising, unreal being, whom I have called the Personage. The Personage is the man others believe we are or have been. Why don't I try to depict him as I think I have known him?¹⁶

After stating his purpose, Maurois goes on in the next paragraph to speak of his method:

In that instant....I decided to write the story of my difficult life in a direct, unromanticized form. Naturally, like every biographer, I shall make mistakes, some through fault of memory, others through fault of judgment. I hope....he the reader will find few serious omissions or culpable complacencies. I shall not mask any of my faults.... The man I am going to portray for you is the man I was or the one I believe myself to have been.¹⁷

Andre Maurois did not lose sight of his purpose in writing I Remember, I Remember, for his autobiography presents a truthful self-portrait, with no attempt at "fictionalized" or "novelized" treatment. When he writes of his private life the author shows a delicacy in self-revelation which is free from any trace of self-excuse; his

¹⁶ Andre Maurois, I Remember, I Remember, (New York and London: Harper & Bros., 1942), p. 2.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 3.

portrayal of family life is made with tender humor and the love stories are told with grace and candor. Maurois does not pretend to great knowledge or to have played a great part in world affairs; yet his life-story presents a generous sampling of unusually shrewd judgments of men and events and its glimpses of famous people--and there are many--are given simply and without affectation. Where he writes of his life as an author, he makes few claims for his own work except to plead his industry and sincerity; in his analysis of his writings he displays a keen sense of self-criticism. One critic has said of the book:

It is hard for a novelist, who is also a great biographer, to attempt auto-biography. The novelist is tempted by the imp of invention; the biographer may be cozened by the angel of arrangement; and between these two influences directness and simplicity are only too likely to be sacrificed. Andre Maurois has resisted....¹⁸

I Remember, I Remember tells the story of the author's life in an entertaining and informative fashion. Chronological order is maintained throughout and there is a wealth of interesting details and illustrative anecdotes. Beginning with his early childhood, Maurois relates his life experiences up through the year 1941. The author gives much information concerning his early childhood and youth and he

¹⁸ R. Ellis Roberts, "I Remember, I Remember", review, Saturday Review of Literature, 25: 6, October 17, 1942.

has much to relate about his education and his teachers. No less completely does Maurois treat of his experiences in the field of industry and of his liaison work with the British during World War I. The author relates with great delicacy the events of his personal life in his marriage to Janine Szymkiewicz, the Russian girl who found life so difficult in the small provincial town of Elbeuf; and he also gives a clear picture of his second marriage to Simone de Cacaillet, the French woman who has done so much to aid Maurois in the preparation of his later books. The reader gets an informative view of Maurois's life between the years 1920 and 1940, which were the years when he did so much writing, traveling, and lecturing. With becoming modesty Maurois treats of his literary work; for at appropriate points he discusses his literary successes and failures. However, he does not allow the frank analysis of his books to occupy more space than should be allotted in the life-story of any writer.

Inevitably, since I Remember, I Remember was written in 1941, World War II takes up a disproportionate amount of Maurois's attention. The author is a patriotic and loyal citizen of France and in his autobiography is recorded what France means to one man.

As far as can be judged at the present time,

I Remember, I Remember presents a true likeness of its author. In his autobiography André Maurois has put his search for truth ahead of his desire to produce a work of art and in so doing has nevertheless produced a book of easily recognizable literary and artistic merit. Maurois has succeeded admirably in avoiding the dangers of autobiography as outlined by him in Aspects of Biography, namely--deliberate forgetfulness on aesthetic grounds, censorship through a sense of shame, and rationalization. He has truly tried to portray the man he believes himself to have been.

CHAPTER VI

ANDRE MAUROIS AND THE NEW BIOGRAPHY

The purpose of this study has been to determine the place of André Maurois in the development of the "new biography".

A brief history of biographical writing from earliest times up to the twentieth century has been given, in order to trace the major developments in this literary field and in order to touch upon the highlights. For purposes of clarification and differentiation, that biography written previous to 1900 has been termed "traditional", whereas the biography of the twentieth century has been termed "new" or "modern". These terms are not used to mean, or even to imply, that all biographical writing can be so classified; for, as has been shown, some life-stories written as early as the eighteenth century possess many of the characteristics of modern biographical writing while many of the present-day biographies still follow the pattern of life-writing which may be called typical of the traditional type.

It has been shown that, as closely as can be determined at present, the change in biographical writing came about at the beginning of the twentieth century.

An analysis of the aims and methods of modern biography as compared with those of traditional biography has revealed that the aims of modern biography are far removed from those of early life-writing up to the eighteenth century; but that the "new biography" differs from the life-writing of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries not so much in its purpose, as in its method and in its style. This change in biographical writing was brought about by the "new" intellectual outlook of the first twenty years of the present century. It had as its principal factors a search for scientific truth and a spirit of free inquiry that threatened traditional beliefs and time-honored customs. The new psychology proclaimed the complexity of the individual and thus character analysis became dominant in biography. There was a definite attempt to "humanize" great men in **their** biographies.

The aim of the "new biographer" is to portray a personality and in so doing to create a work of art; he attempts to combine a maximum of scientific material with perfection of literary form. The outstanding characteristics of the "new biography" are: first, its form--it often uses the novel, the drama, or the essay, rather than history and there is an emphasis on design with a conscious striving for unity; second, its scientific approach--it is

truthful, impartial and dispassionate; third, its style-- it is one of conscious and sustained brilliance and employs every means of securing vividness, yet it maintains chronological order. The vogue of the "new biography" is not dependent on its air of apparent novelty, but on its appropriateness to the modern mind. The present-day reader often goes to biography because he is interested in himself; identification is sought and in a biography which "humanizes" great men, portraying their struggles and conflicts, the reader can find comparison and much satisfaction.

A review of Maurois's Aspects of Biography has revealed that Andre Maurois feels that it is the perfection of art form which identifies the modern biography and sets it above that of previous centuries. Maurois holds that true biography is an art and that the biographer is an artist when he combines authentic facts with perfection of literary form; when he avails himself of all existing material on his subject and then, through a process of careful selection chooses the vivid details; when he so completely understands his subject that he can present him to the reader so as to make him real. Maurois also feels that biography cannot be an art unless it is a means of expression or self-deliverance for the author. He sees biography so closely related to the novel that it is

possible to adopt the form of the novel in biographical writing.

In analyzing M. Maurois's theories of biography and their application in relation to his major and minor biographies, it has been shown that Maurois did not, at all times, put his theory into practice. Ariel and Disraeli were written before he set forth his theories in his Aspects of Biography; and it seems evident that it was from his experience in the writing of these first two books, and the criticism directed toward them, that Maurois formulated his ideas on biographical writing.

Ariel and Disraeli may be considered as important in the development of biography from a historical standpoint, because they started the vogue of "fictionalized" biography and they influenced the trend toward "romanticized" biography. Through these two books, Maurois gave considerable force to the current which caused biography to drift toward the novel. Ariel, particularly, is largely responsible for the increasingly prevalent notion that biography should read like fiction. This life of Shelley, however, because of its form, and also because of its fragmentary nature cannot be classed as pure biography. The method employed in Disraeli is essentially that of Ariel, but its literary style is on a higher level.

In Disraeli Maurois reached what may be called his height of literary composition. This biography is superior to Ariel because of a difference in its aim, in its method, and in its style. Disraeli is definitely a better piece of writing; and it illustrates more clearly what the fictional, romantic approach can do for biography.

Maurois's Ariel and his Byron reveal two widely different conceptions of life-writing and of the two, the conception which directed the life of Byron is the more satisfactory from the standpoint of the purpose of true biography. Byron is better biographical writing than either Ariel or Disraeli; for in this life of Byron, the best qualities of factual biography are blended with the artistry of the Maurois method. Here Maurois reached his height of biographical composition.

Maurois's later biographies do not attain the level of Byron, nor do they illustrate a method which is historically significant. The lack of personal affinity between Maurois and the other men whose life-stories he undertook to write, and in some cases the seemingly apparent lack of interest in the work may account for the indifferent quality of the remaining biographies. Dickens and Tourgeniev are largely literary criticism. Chateaubriand is Maurois's best biographical work since Byron; Voltaire

is perhaps the least significant; and Lyautey is the least representative of the Maurois method.

Andre Maurois's autobiography presents a truthful self-portrait with no attempt at "fictionalized" treatment. In I Remember, I Remember, Maurois has put his search for truth ahead of his desire to produce a work of art, and in so doing has nevertheless produced a book of easily recognizable literary and artistic merit.

From the data presented, it may be concluded that the twentieth century has witnessed the development of a "new biography"; and that Andre Maurois deserves recognition for his contributions to the developments in this literary field.

This study has shown that Maurois's contributions to the development of the "new biography" have been: first, the introduction of "fictionalized" biography through Ariel; second, the popularization of the above-mentioned type of biography, sometimes referred to as "romanticized", or "novelized", through Disraeli which illustrates more clearly than does Ariel what the fictional approach can do for biography; and third, a life of Lord Byron which incorporates the best qualities of true biography with the artistry of the Maurois method.

This study has also shown that, between the publication of his early works--Ariel and Disraeli--and the publication of Byron, Maurois changed his theories of biographical writing, as well as his method; and that Byron illustrates the superiority of Maurois's later method.

Thus, from the material herein presented, it may be concluded that so far André Maurois's work as a biographer has been uneven. He has experimented. In some respects he has failed; in Byron he has succeeded. The method employed in Ariel and Disraeli, although not marked in its successful use, has some value. The fictional method is not the only method, as Maurois once believed; but it should not be put aside as completely worthless. The historical significance of Ariel has proved and may continue to prove great. It is Byron, however, which has earned for Maurois recognition in the field of biography. It is to be hoped that in the future Byron, rather than Ariel, will be considered André Maurois's most characteristic biographical work. It is certainly his greatest.

COMPREHENSIVE ABSTRACT

Biography has become one of our most popular literary forms. Literary artists such as Lytton Strachey, Gamaliel Bradford, Philp Guedalla, Emil Ludwig, and André Maurois are largely responsible for the present-day vogue of biography. It is the purpose of this study to treat one of these artists--Andre Maurois--in such a manner as to determine his proper place in the development of modern biography. The consideration of this study seems justified in the light of previous investigations and criticisms that range from those which refuse Maurois recognition as a biographer to those which credit him with the introduction, popularization, and even perfection of a new type of life-writing.

This study has attempted to prove that the contributions of André Maurois to the field of biography are threefold: first, the introduction of "fictionalized" biography; second, the popularization of the above-mentioned type of biography, sometimes called "romanticized" or "novelized"; third, a life of Byron which will take a high place in Byron bibliography in particular, and in the field of life-writing in general.

A brief history of biographical writing from

earliest times up to the twentieth century has been given in order to trace the major developments in this literary field. For purposes of differentiation, that biography written previous to 1900 has been termed "traditional"; and the biography of the twentieth century has been termed "new". An analysis of the aims and methods of traditional biography and those of the modern biography has been given for purposes of clarification and evaluation of what is termed the "new biography". This has revealed that there was a definite change in biographical writing at the turn of the twentieth century, brought about by the "new" intellectual and scientific outlook of the age.

The "new biography" has been evaluated as to purpose, method, and style to show that its aim is to portray a personality and in so doing to create a work of art; for the "new biographer" attempts to combine a maximum of scientific material with perfection of literary form.

A review of Andre Maurois's Aspects of Biography has revealed that Maurois feels that it is the perfection of art form which identifies the modern biography and sets it above that of previous centuries. In analyzing M. Maurois's theories of biography and their application in relation to his major and minor biographies, it has

been shown that Maurois did not, in all cases, put his theory into practice.

Ariel and Disraeli, Maurois's first two biographical works have been shown to be important in the development of biography from a historical standpoint, because they started the vogue of "fictionalized" biography and they influenced the trend toward "romanticized" biography. Through these two books, Maurois gave considerable force to the current which caused biography to drift toward the novel. Ariel, particularly, is largely responsible for the increasingly prevalent notion that biography should read like fiction. Disraeli is definitely a better piece of biographical writing; and it illustrates more clearly what the fictional, romantic approach can do for biography.

In this study, however, Byron has been evaluated as a better example of biographical writing than either Ariel or Disraeli; for in this life of Byron the best qualities of factual biography are blended with the artistry of the Maurois method.

An analysis of Maurois's other life-stories has revealed that the later biographies do not attain the level of Byron; nor do they illustrate a method which is historically significant. Dickens and Tourgeniev are

The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem of the existence of solutions of the system of equations (1) and (2) under the assumption that the functions $f_i(x)$ and $g_j(x)$ are continuous and satisfy certain conditions.

In the second part of the paper, we consider the case when the functions $f_i(x)$ and $g_j(x)$ are piecewise continuous and satisfy certain conditions. We show that in this case the system of equations (1) and (2) has a solution which is piecewise continuous and satisfies the same conditions as the functions $f_i(x)$ and $g_j(x)$.

In the third part of the paper, we consider the case when the functions $f_i(x)$ and $g_j(x)$ are continuous and satisfy certain conditions. We show that in this case the system of equations (1) and (2) has a solution which is continuous and satisfies the same conditions as the functions $f_i(x)$ and $g_j(x)$.

In the fourth part of the paper, we consider the case when the functions $f_i(x)$ and $g_j(x)$ are continuous and satisfy certain conditions. We show that in this case the system of equations (1) and (2) has a solution which is continuous and satisfies the same conditions as the functions $f_i(x)$ and $g_j(x)$.

largely literary criticism. Chateaubriand is Maurois's best biographical work since Byron; Voltaire is the least significant; and Lyautey is the least representative of the Maurois method. Maurois's autobiography is a truthful self-portrait, with no attempt at fictionalized treatment. From the standpoint of biographical writing, it has both artistic and literary merit.

From the data herein presented it has been concluded that the twentieth century has witnessed the development of a "new biography" and that Andre' Maurois deserves recognition for his contributions in this literary field.

This study has shown that Maurois's contributions to the development of the "new biography" have been: first, the introduction of "fictionalized" biography through Ariel; second the popularization of the above-mentioned type of biography through Disraeli, which illustrates more clearly than does Ariel what the fictional approach can do for biography; and third, a life of Byron which, because it incorporates the best qualities of true biography with the artistry of the Maurois method, has earned for Andre' Maurois recognition in the field of biography.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE LIFE OF ANDRE MAUROIS

André Maurois comes of the French provincial bourgeoisie. The family was originally from Alsace, but after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, they established their textile mills in the little Norman town of Elbeuf. There Emile-Salomon-Wilhelm Herzog, such is Maurois's real name¹, was born on July 26, 1885.

Before attending school Maurois was tutored in Elbeuf, where he studied English, German, and music. He received his education at the Lycee Corneille in Rouen, where he distinguished himself in English and philosophy. He also studied science, mathematics, Latin, and French, acquiring an appreciation of classical literature and a knowledge of the contemporary literature of his own country. Maurois was fortunate in having inspiring and able instructors. Probably no other teacher exerted a more profound effect on his life and career than Chartier, his professor of philosophy at Corneille. Chartier, who wrote under the pen name of "Alain", looked to socialism to cure all political and social evils; but he did not want actual

¹ Emile Herzog is, of Jewish extraction. He first used the pen name "Andre Maurois" in 1918. In 1939, he petitioned the Court to legalize the name of Andre Maurois.

revolution, believing that a better social order could be brought about through suitable legislation. Chartier was also a lover of art and he aroused in his students a love of artistic beauty and intellectual attainment.

For a time Maurois considered a university career. He continued his studies at the University of Caen from which he received the degree of "Licencie" in Philosophy. He wished to be, like "Alain", a professor of philosophy. His parents, however, refused to consent because they felt that his presence was required at the family mills. Therefore after doing his military service with the infantry at Rouen, he entered the family business at Elbeuf in 1904.

His experience in the field of business left a deep imprint on Maurois's ideas. The post at the factory was not to his liking and quite often it was abominably dull. It was very different from the colorful existence his academic successes had led him to anticipate. Secretly he had desired a life of action; but he was bound to his work in the provincial mill town by family tradition and a sense of duty. For ten long years, Maurois was forced to endure this distasteful life, for which he felt himself unfitted by nature and by his philosophical interests. Indeed, his philosophy was put to a severe test; and he found, much to

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his bewilderment that the utopian social theories with which he had been imbued at the lycee were in many respects inadequate for the solution of present-day economic and social problems.

In 1912 Maurois married a young Russian Catholic, Janine Szymkiewicz, a woman of striking personality who was also remarkably cultured. She had been educated in Switzerland and had studied at Oxford. Of great importance to Emile Herzog's career was the fact that his wife brought him into close acquaintance with English civilization and culture. Since Mme. Herzog did not care particularly for the small town of Elbeuf, the Herzogs took an apartment in Paris; but they continued to maintain a home in Elbeuf and divided their time between the two places.

Meanwhile as far back as 1905, Maurois had tried his hand at writing to satisfy in a vicarious manner his desire for action. He made contributions to local newspapers and magazines. His factory labors allowed little spare time; but he devoted his evenings to writing, partly to amuse himself and partly to relieve the day's monotony. It is true that the work in the mills delayed the commencement of his literary career; yet these years, though seemingly dull and uninspiring, were not wasted. They were years of much

profitable reading especially in philosophy and in the English classics.

In 1914 the war came and Maurois was mobilized immediately. Because of his knowledge of English, which had been supplemented since his lycee days by frequent business trips to England, he was assigned as an interpreter to the British Expeditionary Force. The war was a distinct literary advantage for Maurois because the nature of his military duties left him a good deal of leisure in which to write. From the outset he began taking notes and recording the keen observations of the British which were to make up his first book, Les Silences du Colonel Bramble, published in 1918 under the pen name of "Andre Maurois". This first book proved an enormous success and its popularity made the author famous almost overnight.

After the war Maurois returned to the cloth-manufacturing business at Elbeuf; but after the excitement of the war years, factory life seemed more monotonous than ever before. He wished to escape from the drudgery of industry. Moreover, the success of his first publication led him to believe that he might aspire to a literary career. Therefore he began to spend most of his time in Paris, writing and meeting with literary groups. His next

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TO THE HONORABLE SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th inst. in relation to the proposed amendment to the constitution of the University, and in reply to inform you that the same has been referred to the Committee on the subject, and that they are now considering the same. I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Yours very truly,
JOHN D. JACKSON, President.

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two books, Ni Ange, Ni Bete (1919) and Les Discours du Docteur O'Grady (1922) were not well received; but in 1923 Ariel, ou la Vie de Shelley was published and with this publication, Maurois began to be recognized in the literary world.

At this point in his life Maurois was trying to decide whether he would be a businessman, using literature as a hobby, or a professional writer. The death of his wife in 1924, followed by his father's death the next year, provided the solution. Soon afterward Maurois left Elbeuf; for his literary success had made him financially independent and he felt justified at last in discarding the business traditions of his family. He settled in Paris with the intention of being a writer and nothing else. He married again. His second wife, a member of the most cultivated circles of Paris was Simone de Caillavet, the granddaughter of Mme. Arman de Cavaillet who had been a friend of Anatôle France. This marriage was happier than his first; and thus Maurois had at once settled his two greatest problems--that of his profession and that of his home life.

Between 1925 and 1930 Maurois went through a period of exceptionally rich literary productivity. His best works appeared in rapid succession; Bernard Quesnay (1926),

La Vie de Disraeli (1927), Climats (1928), Aspects de la Biographie (1928), and Don Juan, ou la Vie de Byron (1930). These books increased his reading public, not only in France but in England and America as well.

In 1927 Maurois made a lecture tour of the United States and in 1930 he was a visiting professor at Princeton University. He was much interested in American civilization and has several times since made trips to this country.

The years from 1930 to 1939 were busy ones for Maurois. He spent much time in travel--in England, on the Mediterranean, in America, and in North Africa; he received honorary doctorates from the Universities of Princeton, Oxford, Edinburgh, and Saint Andrew; and he was admitted to the French Academy. During this time he wrote articles and delivered lectures, and he published several books, among which were Tourgeniev (1931), Lyautey (1931), Voltaire (1932), Mes Songes que voici (1933), Edouard VII et son temps (1933), Magiciens et Logiciens (1935), Histoire d'Angleterre (1937), Chateaubriand (1938), and Un Art de Vivre (1939).

Maurois had been an officer in the reserves since his military service in the first World War. Therefore when war

came again in 1939, he applied for active service and was once again given duty in liaison work with the British. He served in both France and England for two years.

In 1940 Andre Maurois came to the United States to deliver the Lowell lectures in Boston, Mass. He was in this country when Paris was overtaken by the Nazis in the summer of 1940. Thus he decided to remain in the United States until France was liberated. In the summer of 1944, Maurois returned to France and did liason work with the Frency Army for another six months. He has now regained his home in Paris; and he is living there now. He is still writing. His new book, to be published by Harper & Bros. in September, 1947, will be entitled Woman Without Love. Maurois is planning another trip to the United States soon; for he is scheduled to give a six-months course on Balzac and Tolstoy, beginning in September, 1947 at the University of Kansas City.

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